

The Burning

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Summary:

It takes Bill Denbrough for Its insidious games.

1. Stupid Stuttering Bill

Author's Note:

- Inspired by [Aftershocks](#) by [stylishbutdefinitelyillegal](#).

Notes for the Chapter:

i loved stylishbutdefinitelyillegal's idea/fic and felt inspired by their idea and ran with it differently so shout out and may thanks to them. hope this isnt complete trash. not quite sure yet what this is but its something.

When Bill saw the door open and Beverly's father on the ground, blood flowing into the carpet, all he could think was no no not again not Beverly. But the scene in the bathroom left no doubt who had done this. It.

Bill forced himself to look and knew he had to do something. If no one else would, if everyone else just looked away, even the rest of the losers he wouldn't. There would be no more Georgie's or Patrick's or Betty's. Bill would stop It. Bill would stop it before It hurt Beverly. Even if he had to do it alone.

There was no time to waste, his heart pounding in his chest. There was no telling when It had taken Beverly. If she was still- she **had** to be. She was fine and this would be over soon. This nightmare that had started with a boat and a drain and a crazy murderous clown.

Bill grabbed a crow bar from Mr. Marsh's tool box and raced to the house on Neibolt St. It looked unchanged from the last time he had been here. All evidence of their battle with It wiped away as if it had never happened. Bill smashed the crowbar against the rotting chair. Hot angry tears falling down his cheeks.

Soon. Soon. Soon.

He tied the rope that looked like it might hold even if it had lain there for countless years and climbed down into the well that might

as well have been a mouth, a maw open wide. Dark and jagged, with the stench of gray water wafting up as Bill went down down down.

He hadn't even thought to bring a flashlight.

Stupid. How could he have been so stupid. Down here in the dark, the severity of his situation crawled up his spine. No plan. No back up no flashlight.

"S-stupid," he whispered to himself, forcing himself forward. He had to save Beverley. "S-stupid. S-stupid."

"Sssstupid St-stuttering B-b-billy boy."

It.

"I-I'm not s-scared of you," he called out into the dark, searching for the telltale glowing eyes. But down here, with the echo and shadows, It could be anywhere.

His hands tightened on the crowbar.

The clown laughed and Bill followed. He was sure this was a trap. It was proabaly leading him right to Its lair. Think of Beverly. Think of Beverly. Its lair was where Beverly would be and the sooner he got there the sooner this would be over and then Mike and Ben and Stan would all be friends again. Even Richie and Eddie would forgive him. They could move on and Bill's parents would stop sitting in their room, staring at walls, eyes glazed over with tears.

Bill followed the ethos of Its laugh. The mouse chasing the cat. The mouse being led on and felt only a hot burning in his throat, hands gripping the metal so hard they hurt.

It went on for ages, the tunnels seemingly endless. The cold seeped into Bill skin, socks soaked in gray water and he tried to think of what Eddie had said about staph infections.

He finally spotted the clown, eyes a bright jaundiced yellow as grinned at Bill before disappearing into a door.

It wasn't really open, just ajar as if It was inviting Bill in. Waiting for

him. Watching him. It still thought It would win.

Bill thought of all the missing kids, their posters stapled over each others. He thought of the poster Richie had found of himself in the house on Neibolt St. But most of all he thought of Georgie and the day he had never come back. How he had wanted to go out looking for him, but his parents had forced him to stay in bed, certain he was just lost in the neighborhood ignoring Bill when he told them Georgie would never get lost.

Fuck this clown.

Bill went in.

Crow bar raised.

Helpless to get Beverly down. The clown nowhere insight. The bodies floating around a pile of lost things. A testament to all the lives that had been lost to this fucking thing. This thing that had ruined his life.

Bill let out a yell, grabbing whatever he could find and pulling Beverly Marsh, who had kissed him once and helped them steal the supplies for Ben even though they hadn't exchanged more than a few words in years, down. Carefully and trying as best he could with one hand holding a crowbar, to bring her down.

"B-beverly," he said shaking her gently, trying to wake her up. "Bev."

"Oh let the girl sleep Billy boy."

And then Bill was thrown back, his back falling onto the hard concrete. The impact knocked the wind out of him, crowbar sailing past.

He was barely getting up when It had him by his shirt holding him up, "Where's the rest of your little gang? I'm feeling like having a whole meal."

Bill spit at It, kicking and slipping out of its hold. His legs hit the ground hard, but this time he was ready for the pain shooting up his bones, and ran for the crowbar, his hand closing around the cool

metal as It grabbed his leg.

He swung, hearing the crunch and knowing he had made contact before swinging again. It let go of him, backing away, one watery eye fixed on him. Its skull was cracked like a porcelain doll's, but there was no blood. Not really.

Bill carefully made his way to Beverly, never taking his eyes off It. "Beverly, please wake up."

"Oh she can't here you Billy boy. You see, she's a long way from here," It giggled rocking back and forth as saliva dripped from its teeth. Bill thought of the pictures of sharks in his textbook; mainly their many rows of teeth.

"What did you do to her?" He felt himself shaking. She had to be okay. She was going to be okay.

It only giggled, the raspy sound echoing all around the chamber.

Bill couldn't help it he looked down at Beverly, stroking her cheek, and thinking of her smile when they had all helped her clean her bathroom. "Bev," he muttered again, "we can't be the losers without you." It was all seven of them or nothing.

Something cold and sticky dripped onto his back.

It.

"Beverly," he cried voice cracking as It embraced him.

Her eyes shot open, took into the scene and went for the crowbar. Anyone else would have frozen or freaked out but Beverly went in blazing.

"Get wrecked you fucking clown! We're not scared of you!"

Bill felt It shake with anger. A creature of fear who can't scare.

"Oh but your friends are and I'll take them! I'll take them all," It wheezed and croaked, bones shifting against Bill who could feel only disgust. "I'll dine on their flesh and then and only then will I eat

you!”

“W-We’ll kill you,” Bill stammered out, tired and aching and so cold he couldn’t remember what it was like to be warm anymore.

It just laughed, “you said it yourself little boy, you’re stronger together but two,” he whispered conspiratorially into his ear, “two is fine dinner.”

“Or dear sweet Beverly can go back up and grow old and forget and you can be my midnight snack right before a good long rest.”

“Bill,” Bev called out, “Let’s just kill this creep.”

“What do you say stuttering Bill? Just you and me? Or the girl too.” It’s rotting breath dusted Bill’s ear.

He nodded, then screamed, “Beverly run!”

And It dragged him down down down the rabbit hole-

we go Mr. It.

Notes for the Chapter:

this whole chapter played out like a scene from
legion in my head, hope it translated well. thoughts?

2. shaking fists & trembling teeth

Summary for the Chapter:

In which things get worse for our young hero and It is as awful as ever. Oh Bill. Didn't anyone ever teach you not to go looking for monsters?

Without any light, Bill loses track of time quickly. He isn't sure where he is. Where It had brought him. But he supposes that even It has to have some sort of home. No, home is the wrong word. It's a nest of sorts. The grate is too heavy for Bill to open and there's no other way out so It doesn't bother to tie him up. There's nothing he can use as a weapon either. He had checked and checked and checked, turning up empty every time.

He was sure he was done for when It dragged him away. He would finally know what his brother felt in his final moments, but It kept him alive. For something. It **had** to be for something and the suspense makes it worse.

Time breaks down into when It is there and when It is out.

Bill prefers when it is out and not there with him, mocking him, toying with him. It gets so angry when Bill refuses to flinch or scream.

But It always comes back. It always comes back and never alone.

That's the worse part, the fear that it might be Richie or Stan; that it might be one of his friends. The wave of guilt that comes with the relief that it's not his friends. He still recognizes the kids every time. That's one bad thing about Derry, about living in a small town, everyone knows everyone. Maybe he didn't know them well, but he had still seen them around town or at school.

It always makes him look, holding his head still, prying his eyes open, before digging into Its dinner. Always offering some to Bill, who swallows bile, ignoring the burn in his throat and rumbling in his belly.

It gets a particular delight from throwing an arm at Bill and watching him scramble back in horror. Bill doesn't know how much more of this never-ending nightmare he can take.

Then it gets worse. Of course it gets worse.

The grate creaks.

Pennywise enters alone for once, a sinister gleam in his putrid eyes. Fear shoots down Bill's spine, knowing in his gut that this is bad. This is very bad, but he doesn't know how.

"Oh B-billy boy."

Bill's sense of self preservation seems to come back to him at that moment because he scrambles to hide, but there's no where too hide. And even if there were the crunch of bones gives him away. Bill's learned not to look down; not to look too hard at what he steps on.

"Come here you little brat," It hisses, dragging him by his shirt, "you must be thirsty by now."

"Humans, such pathetic animals. Only good for one thing." It licks Its lips, drool dripping down his chin.

This is a trap, but Bill can't ignore the burning in his throat. Eddie always said how humans could go weeks without food but only days without water. How long has he been down here? How long ago did he give into the urge to lick his lips which only made it worse?

He must have taken too long because It shakes him, brain rattling in his skull. "Speak little man."

"Wuh-what do you w-want?"

It throws him down on the ground and smiles, pleased that he's going along with Its game. Bill needs time to think and figure something, anything out. But there's really nothing he can do. Bill takes in a deep breathe, things can't get any worse.

He thinks of Beverly and Richie and Stan and hopes they're all okay. That Richie is enjoying his time in the arcade. He selfishly hopes

they're planning his rescue and will soon be down here to finish what they had started that day at the house on Neibolt St.

"Oh but Bbbilly it's not about what I want," the clown says, wagging his finger, "this is about wuh-what you want. Whhat you need." He produces a water bottle with a flourish and a grin, fangs visible.

Its a trap.

Pennywise makes to hand it to Bill. By some instinctual need to survive Bill reaches out, waiting for the shoe to drop. It pulls the bottle of water back, giggling like mad as Bill's hand closes around empty air.

His cheeks flush red with embarrassment and anger. He doesn't know how, but he's going to kill It if its the last thing he ever does.

"Come on B-billy boy, you can do it," It says teasing Bill once more before adding, "Georgie did." The clown erupts into laughter once more.

That snaps Bill out of his trance, he grabs the first thing his hand touches and flings it at the clown. He yells, more desperation than anger before the dryness in his throat becomes too much.

"Let's make a deal since that went so well last time." Its childlike glee is apparent in its shinning red eyes, lips pulled into a smile. But it all sits wrong on the clown; the creature underneath bursting through the seams.

"Just give me the f-f-fucking water!" His hands are curled into fist by his sides, putting all his anger into the glare his gives It.

"Eager are we!"

But Bill doesn't care because It tosses the bottle of water at him and Bill wastes no time or drop as he chugs the water down. Water has never tasted so good. He tips the bottle just soon to get every last drop out, blocking the sound of It laughing at him. Bill almost cries when it runs out. He can't help but look up at the clown. There has to be more if Its keeping him alive for whatever fucked up reason.

Bill doesn't care about any of that right now, he just wants more water.

"Manners little man," Pennywise wheezes out between breathes.

"Th-thank y-you," Bill stammers out, alarms bells going off like crazy in his head.

Its smile is all teeth.

Then It pounces, knocking the air out of him, nails elongating into claws. It holds Bill down even as he kicks and claws at Pennywise, the clown doesn't budge. Instead it makes a choking sound that freezes Bill for a second. He watches as It regurgitates something into Its hand that's the same yellow jaundiced color of Its glowing eyes. Bill can feel the same feeling of dread and disgust that comes with Its presence radiating off whatever that was and almost gags when It brings it too his mouth. "Growing boys need to eat," the clown mocks.

Bill clamps his teeth down, jaw clenching as he renews his struggles with vigor that comes from the sheer terror of eating that thing.

It pins him down, heavy on his chest, claws holding his head in places even as he feels the blood welling up from where Its claws had scratched him. Staph infection. It presses the noxious thing against his mouth, forcing his mouth open and then cutting off his air as Billy gags and chokes, bile rising up from his empty belly.

His vision starts fading, Bill's struggles dying down as his vision starts to swim, everything going dark. He can't hold it anymore. The burning in his throat spreading to his eyes, stinging and burning and he *needs* air.

He takes a breath-

and swallows the thing whole.

It lets him go, watching him, ensuring he doesn't try to throw it back up.

Bill takes in large gulps of air, trying to calm down. Trying and

failing to think of anything but what he had just eaten, aware that no matter how repulsive it had been, it had reminded him how hungry he was.

He gagged again, forcing himself to gulp it all back down, laying on the floor as his vision swam, skin hot and feverish like it had been that day that Georgie had been taken by It.

Bill only lets himself close his eyes when he hears It leave, the tell tale sign of the grate being opened and closed being his indicator.

He really hopes his friends come soon.

Notes for the Chapter:

this whole fic seems to written so much in Bills thoughts which is throwing me off because my writing is usually dialogue driven and sparse but i guess this is good, to practice a slightly different style. i'll never be J RR Tolkien or George R R Martin. or Stephen King for that matter. thoughts?

3. you died screaming

Notes for the Chapter:

i was not happy at all with this chapter but i think i may just be overthinking and i find the more i edit and rewrite the less i like it so its rough is what im saying.

Bill wakes up covered in sweat, body burning among the cold stale air. He forces himself up onto shaky legs and it all comes back to him. His mind feels all fogged up, working through the drowsiness he feels even though he just woke up and he doesn't feel the slightest bit tired. The clown and that thing and the bottle of water that he had greedily gulped down. The dryness it had eased if even just a little. Bill bites back the urge to ease his chapped lips by licking them, knowing it would only make it worse.

At least he's alone. So it can't have been that long. Not unless he was out for days, but he can still feel the relief from the water so it can't have been that long ago. Only hours since-he gags, feeling something crawl up his throat and he squeezes his eyes shut, swallowing and shaking.

There's another bottle of water by the grate, label ripped and torn, but still sealed.

But Bill just feels sick.

He thinks of his friends and forces himself to drink. He needs to stay alive if he's going to escape and finish this. He has to stay alive because his friends are coming for him. He knows it. Beverly wouldn't leave him behind, just like he would never leave her behind. And Richie and Eddie would come because he was one of them. And only losers cared about other losers.

The water eased the fever he had to be running.

Was this what a staph infection was? Or was this from the grime and dirt? Eddie would have known. And Richie would have laughed at

him before Stan told him to fuck off.

Bill couldn't shake the drowsiness from his eyes, or the jumpiness he got from every shadows he glimpsed out of the corner of his eye. The urge to lay down and sleep forever was strong and it had been days since he had gotten any real rest, constantly waking up at every sound, not wanting the clown to find him asleep.

His body arched, legs giving out. He had to sit down at least. Bill found the cleanest spot he could, facing the grate.

Just a few minutes. Just for a minute or two he told himself as his eyes slid closed.

The screeching of metal against metal woke Bill up. He didn't feel any better. Just the hunger pains and the heat under his skin that didn't seem to go away. What he would have given for his bed and mom's soup.

Not that his mom cooked anymore.

His stomach rumbled.

Bill watched It push the grate shut with ease, possessed by a less than human strength. He was dragging along a body. It had a hop in his step, clearly relishing Its latest meal. Fear choked the air, all that was left of the poor kid.

Bill shuddered, knowing what came next. The agonizing pain of having to look and know that he had failed. Another kid had gone missing in Derry. Another kid had been taken, fated to become another missing persons poster.

He tried to stand, but found that he couldn't. His legs were too weak to support him, falling back down. Bill glanced up at the clown, eyes dark with hate, "Fff-fuck off. J-just do it and g-g-go back to sleep all-ready!" He was tired of being kept alive for Its amusement when he knew how this would end. How it would never really end.

"But little boy," Pennywise said, dragging the body over to where Bill was sprawled, "we have so much to do." Its eyes shifted from brown to blue, one eye staring hard at him, the other never focusing at all.

The clown's voice squealed with delight, the kind he only got when finally eating the fruit of his labors.

Bill kept staring at the clown, not wanting to look down just yet; not wanting to know.

Its glee sharpened into something sinister as It croaked, "I've been a bad host. You must be hungry."

He shook his head vigorously, not wanting to have to swallow down whatever the hell that noxious thing had been. "I-I'm fine." Bill even attempted a weak smile. He didn't think he would be able to swallow more down when the first batch had him gagged at the very memory. The feeling of the slimy thing against his throat still fresh in his mind.

"Oh no Billy boy," It said gesturing down as if It was a ringmaster, presenting the next act, "I insist." Its teeth protruded from Its mouth, sharpened into jagged shards of broken glass.

Bill kept shaking his head, ignoring the rumbling from his stomach that was now at the forefront since he had finally quenched his thirst.

It sat down next to him, Its arm going around his shoulder. "On the menu tonight is. . . dear Miss Marsh!"

He couldn't help it. Bill looked down.

It wasn't her. It wasn't Beverly or anyone of the losers.

It was Gretta who bullied Bev, spilling trash on her and spreading rumors. She hadn't deserved this. No more than Patrick or Betty had.

"Do you want it to be Miss Marsh," Pennywise asked with faux camaraderie.

Bill shook his head. He didn't want it to be anyone. "Then eat," It said, shoving Bill onto the corpse, voice flat. He grimaced, not wanting to be anywhere near the body. Not wanting to hear the crunch of bones every time he took a step.

"I wonder how Eddie tastes? The boy is so wound up with fear. . . rip e," It trailed off caught up in Its own twisted hunger. But the threat was clear.

Bill picked up Greta's arm, brought it to his mouth but couldn't. Hot tears slid down his cheeks. It was too much.

It snapped, going into Its frenzied state as It fed shoving Bill aside. Its teeth tore threw Greta like butter. Blood sprayed, drops falling against his face. He couldn't look away. Caught in a grotesque fascination of seeing it happen before his very eyes.

Once It had Its fill, It tore a chunk off of Greta. A piece so mangled Bill couldn't have known where it came from.

Bill felt the now familiar urge to throw up, nausea filling every inch of him.

But the clown brought the flesh to Bill mouth, lips smearing with fresh blood, and shoved it down his throat. Bill gagged. It was too much to swallow whole. He spit it out, hacking it out.

It was watching him in obvious fascination, waiting.

For his friends.

Bill forced himself to pick the chunk of Greta back up and eat it. Chewing the raw flesh before finally swallowing. His tears had long since ran out: body heaving from the trauma of it all. The piece of Greta settled in his stomach like lead. Bill wiped the blood of his mouth and tried hard not to think about

He couldn't bring himself to look at the clown. Not now.

Bill curled into himself, blotting the sewers and It out, if only for a moment. New tears streamed down his face and he kept his eyes tightly shut.

Notes for the Chapter:

idk when the next update will be bc school and work during the week but i do intend for it to be updated

soon-ish. catch me on tumblr most days:
lissbethsalander

4. an abstraction

He loses track of how much corpse meat he had choked down. The clown shaking with glee, pressing chunks of what had been Greta to Bill's mouth. "Down the hatch Billy boy," It had said, eyes glowing bright like a torch in the darkness of the sewer chamber.

There had been more water after. Water that Bill had swallowed hoping to wash away the metallic taste of blood from his mouth. It had been the first time in days his throat no longer felt coated with sawdust. His head no longer muddled by dehydration and hunger.

The whole event had exhausted Bill, his limbs heavy. He had flopped down like a marionette with its stings cut off, trying to blot the whole ordeal out. His sobs had echoed around the sewers, tears freely falling onto the grimy floor.

At least the clown hadn't mocked him then, too busy cracking the bones, sucking out even the marrow, not leaving anything behind for the gutter rats.

Bill had let the exhaustion carry him away, wanting nothing more than to melt away into the nothingness of the shadows.

Later.

Much later.

After more bodies and tears just to wake up to more- Bill's jaw ached from working through corpse flesh, his bones brittle and tired and no longer hungry, the clown finally lets him be. It's the only time the clown truly lets him be, when It is out hunting. Hunting and bringing back more children.

Bill dreads the return of the sewer clown and what it means for him. Forcing himself to swallow down Its victims never gets any easier, no matter how much he reminds himself its for his friends.

After, Bill had picked himself up and pulled at the grate until his hands had gone red, muscles burning, and still the door had not

budged. Not even an inch. It wasn't till then that he truly began to despair. Shame and revulsion at what he had done, what he had *eaten*, filled his thoughts.

How could he ever face his friends?

He never lost track of who. Always making sure it wasn't Mike or Stan or . . . Which always made him feel worse and selfish. He didn't let himself turn away from their face before-

Bill ran his tongue against his teeth, a habit he had gotten into after he had woken, jaw arching and gums bleeding, teeth sharpened to a point. He had sat down in horror and cried and cried, chest heaving, a common occurrence down here. It had patted his head once It had come back, forgetting the body It had brought for a moment, and smiled, pleased with itself.

He had squirmed away from Its foul grasp.

Once his teeth had sharpened enough that, It forced Bill to tear into the corpse himself.

He hadn't been able to hold back the bile then, vomiting and crying and screaming as It held him, whispering "Soon this will be over little one. Soon the pain will subside along with your weak human body and you will be magnificent."

It was right. The ache that went all the way down into his marrow, only ever stopped after. It was only then that he could rest and dream; when the ache in his bones went away.

In his dreams, Georgie was still alive and happy and they had never ever heard of Pennywise. In his dreams, Bill was happy and there was only ever sunshine.

He got used to the repulsive routine of sleeping and eating and feeling his bones shift under his skin as his muscles ached and he scratched his skin red to relieve the throbbing underneath his skin. He had gotten used to it, but the horror of it all persisted. The horror and fear not at It. He had stopped fearing It, had stopped giving It that satisfaction long ago.

Bill's fear was all his own.

Maybe it was best if his friends left him down here to rot. It would be better if they forgot all about Bill and moved on and lived their lives. Richie deserved to have people that loved him and cared about him. So did Bev. Ben should have never moved here. They all deserved to be happy.

And they would be.

Hadn't that been the bargain?

It arrives, dragging a new corpse, a new meal. It wraps Bill in his putrid embrace, wiping the tears from his eyes, whispering things meant to be reassuring.

"There there child, you'll feel better with your belly full."

It leads him over to Its latest kill, stroking Bill's back gently, urging him forward. Bill let's himself be led, taking what comfort he can.

"Soon you won't even remember why you were crying."

He does feel better. After.

The thought repulses him, even as he swallows down corpse flesh, choking on it, wanting to retch, if he thinks about what he's eating for too long. If he dwells on it.

For his friends, he forces the flesh down.

For the poor kids, he dwells on it, each body etched into his memory.

He lays on the floor, feeling so far away from himself. The cold concrete easing the tremors under his skin. He ignores the clown while Its there, dragging things about. Dragging the bodies to where Beverly had been he assumes. Where Bill had found her comatose.

We all float down here.

Bill wonders when it will end? How many kids could there be left in

Derry, a town of one elementary school and one high school.

Laying down, Bill can hear so much sound echo throughout the tunnels. Rats splashing in grey water and their sequels; the distant sound of water moving throughout the sewer system.

Bill curls into himself, hugging his arms against his body, trying to remember being warm. Sunlight never reaches down here in the cold damp sewers. He's gotten used to being constantly cold.

Bill's mind feels so far removed from his body that at times he doesn't even notice when It leaves.

He runs over memories of school, when Richie had gotten into trouble on purpose all because Bill had been struggling with his presentation and their teacher had joined the class in on picking on Bill's stutter. The times when Stan and Bill had snuck into the hospital and given Eddie junk food after Eddie's mother was sure that her son was dying, again. Or when Bill had skipped class to help Stan reorganize his binder after Henry Bowers had dumped all his things out, papers flying everywhere.

When Bill came back to himself, hearing the dragging footsteps of the clown coming back, he woke right back into the nightmare.

He rubbed the tears from his eyes, hating the times It would wipe them from his eyes, when It would hold him and call him *child*.

And waited for it to happen all over again.

Notes for the Chapter:

had to get it out now. tbh this was edited during class and hopefully my prof doesn't hate me too much. now i've got to go watch some videos of kittens or something before i can write another chapter. thoughts?

5. your need grows teeth

Summary for the Chapter:

In which Bill's stutter gets worse.

For a second after he wakes up, Bill thinks he's in his room back home, curled under his blanket that had been used as a tent by Georgie and him loads of times. Sunlight gently streaming in, turning the light blue blankets white.

Then he blinks, rubbing away the sleep from his eyes.

The white in the corner of his eyes becomes clear, becomes bones. He's lying in the middle of carefully arranged bones serving as a bed. There's no water. And Bill *knows* that its been a day since he had fallen asleep.

His chest tightens, scrambling out of the bed of bones, using a puddle of gray water to check his reflection. The last time he had woken, knowing there was something innately wrong about himself his teeth had sharpened to a point.

He looked wrong, and if he hadn't know it was him, Bill wouldn't have recognized himself. He was covered in dirt and grime; his skin a sickly pale color he hadn't even had when he had been bedridden for days; auburn locks stuck to his sweaty skin.

But the worst part was his eyes.

They were no longer the same seaglass blue as his mother's, not really. The blue was flecked with the toxic yellow of It's glowing eyes. In fact, Bill realized his own eyes now held a dim glow. It was why he had mistaken there too be light in the sewer chamber.

Bill's body trembled, a scream dying in his throat.

He needed It to come back. He need to know what the hell was happening to him. He needed to hear it said by Pennywise himself.

Bill blinked, willing his eyes to go back to normal, like he had so

often seen the clown change Its own, but no matter how hard he blinked, Bill's eyes remained flecked with yellow.

He waited for the clown to return, knowing It was never gone for long. Children and their fear weren't hard to come by. Especially in Derry where it seemed to adult ever took note of what went on with the children. Bill sat down in front of the grate, having long given up on trying to open the door.

He aggressively ignored the hunger welling up in the pit of his stomach, biting his own lip as he waited. His teeth cut through his own skin, blood blooming. Bill sucked at the cuts, waiting and watching now that the tunnels were no longer obscured by shadows and darkness.

He sat up in anticipation as soon as It appeared in the tunnel leading into the chamber, flushing red with shame. Bill gave It a wide berth as It opened the grate and stepped inside.

Why didn't you make a run for it now, Bill thought to himself. With his newfound sight, he might have stood a chance at escaping from here.

But he didn't.

Bill's eyes flickered unwittingly down, looking for the corpse It would surely be dragging along. But this time, Pennywise had returned empty handed, a fact that had the clown enraged.

"Oh little one, we shall go hungry tonight," It snarled, "meddlesome troublesome soon to be dead brats."

Bill shook his head, "I-I'm n-no-not li-ike you. I wo-won't-"

It's eyes cooled from startling flames to deep blue pools as he drew Bill into Its embrace, stroking his hair back. Bill didn't fight back, knowing it was easier to go along with the clown, rather than try to fight It off. He soaked up the little warmth It offered.

"Once you've feasted on flesh, nothing is ever as good," It wheezed, "and soon those pesky human emotions won't bother you."

Bill was caught between wanting to curl into It and shaking his head. He would never be like It. Never. He couldn't do to others what It had done to him, destroying his life.

He thought of his friends, but the thought of Stan and Mike was spoiled by-what would they say if they saw him now. A deep shame ran through Bill as he let It rock him gently. "Our last meal shall be a feast and then child we will sleep and when you wake humanity will seem to you like a distant dream fuzzier with each day until its all lost like tears in the rain."

Bill kept shaking his head. He wouldn't let it-he would remember and never be like It. He would never let himself forget; not Richie's magnified eyes or all the times Stan had stopped and pointed out a certain bird; not the days they had gone up to help Mike out with the sheep so they could all go play in the Barrens together.

"W-wuh-what are y-you do-doing t-to me," Bill stammered out, suspecting but not really wanting to know for sure. "Wuh-what's h-happening t-to me?" It came out closer to a sob than actual words.

"Oh little one," It said, running his fingers threw Billy's hair, cradling him against his chest, "I think you already know."

Bill closed his eyes. He didn't want to look at It. He was sure It would be gloating, maw twisted into a smirk. But Bill felt only comfort coming from It as it muttered nonsense and held him and Bill was warmer than he'd been in days.

It had to be days by now.

But then where were his friends?

Maybe they had abandoned him. Maybe Richie and Ben had meant it when they had said they'd rather ignore It, just like the adults. Maybe that was for the best.

"I-I'm thirsty," he admitted. Surely It wouldn't let him go without water, not after all the trouble It had gone through to keep him alive. Bill had almost forgotten what it was like to be truly thirsty, throat so parched he couldn't even speak.

It shook his head, shifting Bill so that they were eye to eye. “You don’t need it anymore,” It replied, licking Its own drool coated lips. He watched with fascination as It stirred up Its own hunger. “You will drink blood and feast on the flesh of brats.” It started shaking in a mad fit of laughter.

He tried to pull away, but Pennywise grabbed him, holding him in place with Its claws. “Won’t you,” It purred.

His heart thumped hard in his chest, blood rushing in his eyes. Bill knew what the sewer clown wanted to hear, so he nodded.

The clown released him, delirium consuming It. It laughed and Its mouth frothed, eyes rolling back as if It was remembering when It had last fed.

Bill backed away, careful not to make a sound. He wasn’t sure the clown was even aware he was there. With any luck the clown would let him be for the rest of the day. Maybe It would even leave again and-

He stopped himself, not wanting to go further and instead focused on the sounds that rang through the tunnels. Rats and water dripping and-

Footsteps echoed above.

Bill focused, straining to hear more.

“Holy shit!”

“IT was here.”

“Well where is IT now?”

“How the fuck am I supposed to know!”

“Do you see Bill up there?”

“Then he’s alive!”

His friends! Bill felt a tremendous joy he had only ever felt that day

at the quarry. The last time they were carefree children.

He looked around the room only to find Its gaze fixed on him.

Notes for the Chapter:

this chapter flowed so well for me and like lab can suck but i had lots of time to write so yay. also cliffhanger ;)

6. in these dreams it's always you:

Bill can feel the annoyance dripping off It as It listens to his friends. He tries and fails to hold back a smile. His friends have come to rescue him. Because they wouldn't ever leave each other behind. Just like he hadn't left Eddie in the house on Neibolt St. Just like he had rescued Beverly.

The clown shakes with rage, illusion slipping and Bill stands transfixed by the image bleeding through. Bright bright orange lights among darkness that grows teeth. His own mind doesn't even think to scream as he feels the full extent of Its hunger. Of It.

When he snaps out of it the clown is holding him, keeping he upright. Bill feels his body tremble, tears falling, yet it all feels so far away. His mind reels with what he had seen.

"They wont take you from me little one," It says, brushing his tears away.

Bill looks up at Pennywise, who grew now towering over Bill more than usual, "They're my friends and they'll save me and kill you!" His own anger welled up in his throat.

It laughed, gently embracing Bill before whispering into his ear, "my dear child, what do you think they'll do to you when they see what you've become? Will they welcome you still? Will they even recognize you? Or believe you to be me."

He whimpered, knowing It was right. What he had done down here-but he could still save them. He could still spare his friends so that they could escape from It.

Bill clung to the many ruffles on the clown's suit, burying his face. He had to keep the clown here. He had to keep It here and away from *them*.

The voices continue, echoing louder, feet splashing in the water. Why won't they just leave them alone?

It places Bill down, untangling Bill's hands from their hold. "They will not take *mine* from me," It spat as It dragged open the grate and went into the tunnels after the losers.

Bill had to do something or it would be his fault all over again. It would be G-his brother all over again. It had not closed the grate completely, still the crack was too large enough for Bill to slip through.

If the clown could do it why shouldn't he be able to? Did his eyes not glow? It was a terrible truth that Bill always did his best to push down into the dark reaches of his mind. It would open because he could open it.

Bill ignored everything as he went to push open the grate.

It slid open just enough for Bill to slip out and after It.

The last time Bill had ventured into the tunnels, he had wished for a flashlight, kicking himself for not bringing one. This time, he didn't need one. He followed the screams of the losers breaking into a run, muscles straining after going for so long without use.

He ran right to the chamber where he had found Bev. Where the bodies all floated just like It had promised they would.

He couldn't bring himself to step inside.

Bill had screamed when he had seen himself staring back in a puddle; less a boy than something that belonged down here in the sewers. He didn't know what he would do if he gulped. His parents already acted like Bill wasn't there, he couldn't survive his friends doing the same to him. They were all he had left.

Stan yelled and Bill felt his hesitation die as he stepped into the chamber.

The losers had It surrounded, each brandishing a makeshift weapon.

"Where. The. Fuck. Is. Bill." Richie rushed in to hit at the clown but was thrown back by It. Mike and Eddie rushed in, keeping It from advancing at Richie. Bev pulled Richie up.

It could not settle on a form, switching between the loser's fears as the loser's tried to keep the clown confused by never stopping coming at it.

They weren't scared. Not even a little.

"Bill," Ben cried spotting him hanging back in the shadows. Bill hoped the shadows obscured his glowing eyes.

They all turned to look at him and Pennywise used it to his advantage, claws slicing through Stan's shirt sleeve. Eddie didn't waste a second, jumping on It and pulling It off Stan. They all followed Eddie's lead.

"Don't let the fucker get away," Richie cried.

Mike called out to Bill, "come on let's finish this."

But Bill couldn't move, his legs refused to take another step. They were going to kill It. they were going to finish It.

Isn't that what he wanted?

But where would that leave him?

It caught Bill's stare, smiled and disappeared back into the tunnels.

"Come back you fucker!"

"Bill," Beverly said gently walked over to him.

He took a step back, hyper aware of the exit behind him. He shook his head slowly, not wanting them near. Not wanting them to see. He wouldn't be able to stand their horror at him.

"My boy Bill," cried Richie, "glad to see you're alive old sport!"

They kept closing in around him. Bill screwed his eyes shut, locking his jaw closed, and focusing on the sounds of the rats going about their lives. Richie reached him first, hugging him tightly, so warm and alive. Then the rest of them followed, not noting how stiff Bill was against them.

"We've got to get you out Billy," Eddie muttered, "do you have any idea how many bacteria live down here."

"I though you were done with this," Richie said, rolling his eyes.

"Shut up Richie," Stan snapped, glancing around the chamber.

"Guys, not now," Mike stated.

Bill pulled away from them.

"Are you okay," Beverly asked gently, noting the distress written all over his face.

"Of course he's not okay," Richie snapped, "can you imagine only having that thing for company."

"Shut the fuck up Richie!"

Bill finally opened his eyes, staring hard at the ground rather than looking at *them*. It's impossible to miss the moment they see, breath sucked in. None of them know what to say.

Stan jolts back. He won't meet Bill's eyes. Eddie's grip tightens around the iron rod he had brought down here for It. Beverly keeps searching for his face for the boy she knows.

It's Richie who draws Bill near, grabbing him by the shoulders, "We're going to kill It Bill, just like you said." Bill glances up at Richie, one of his lenses is cracked, but his smile reaches his eyes and Bill knows that all is forgiven. That Richie is sorry he didn't listen to Bill. That they fought and split the group up when it was most important to stay together.

"I-ugh I-I'm s-so-sorry," Bill can't string the words together. None of them mention the teeth for which Bill is grateful.

"I know," Richie says. "But let's get out of here before Eddie's mom misses me." He winks at Bill.

"Richie!"

Bill laughs. For the first time in days he feels alright.

Except for Stan who draws back, refusing to look at him, they form a loose circle around Bill as they exit through the tunnels and up through the well in the house on Neibolt St. the light streaming into the decayed ruins of what was once a house blinds Bill after days of darkness.

He shuts his eyes, having to squint to see anything. There's so much light and noise and he swears he can feel the worry coming from the rest of the losers as Eddie reminds Bill to breathe while Mike rubs his shoulder. It reminds Bill of It and he jerks away.

After a few minutes, Bill's eyes adjust somewhat, sight splattered with sunspots.

"At least the glow stopped," Ben says, "don't know how we would've explained that."

"Guys," Stan says, "how are we going to explain any of this?" Stan still won't look at Bill and he tries not to think what that means, that one of his oldest friends won't even look at him. But it cuts more than he could have imagined.

None of them have anything to say to that.

"H-how l-lo-long has i-it b-be-been?" Bill just wants water and a warm bed and to never let the losers out of his sight ever again.

"Eleven days," Mike responds.

A shudder runs through Bill. He knows the clown isn't dead. Isn't asleep. Why hadn't he helped his friends finish It off when he had the chance?

Bill rides on the handlebars of Mike's bicycle, leaning back against him in the warm summer sun. He almost expects to burst into flames when they pass the church, but that's vampires.

The nurse screams when she sees them enter the hospital and as soon as Bill really sees himself for the first time in days, he understands why. He's covered in dirt, hair tangles and plastered on his skin.

There's something off about him, even in the mirror you can tell.

Ben pulls him away from the mirror and they all refuse to leave the room, refuse to leave him. Mike and Stan take the two chairs in his hospital room. Eddie grips his metal rod as he paces. Beverly and Richie flank him, sitting on the edge of the way, having to duck out of the doctor's way but refusing to move an inch. Ben sits at the foot of his bed, fiddling with a broken flashlight.

More doctors and nurses arrive. Then the police do. It's not until Bill's parent get there that everyone starts asking question. For once the adults in Derry want to know what happened.

The loser's don't even have to look at each other to agree on a version of events that they'd believe.

"Down in the sewers--"

"We found Betty Ripsom's shoe--"

"-knew it had to be a serial killer--"

"And went to look for Bill--"

Bill stayed silent, tracking everyone's movement. His mother cried and cried as she held him. She hadn't even looked at him since Georgie had gone missing. His dad yelled at the doctor's to do something.

No one screamed louder than Mrs. Kaspbrak who had someone found out that Eddie was in the hospital, demanding that they run a MRI on Eddie at once.

Bill just wanted water.

They kept asking him questions and Bill couldn't take it. It was all too much. Too much people. Too much sound. The fluorescent light hurt his eyes.

"Oh my god just let him rest for fuck's sake," Richie yelled.

After much fussing and giving up on getting the losers out, the nurses

ran them all showers and gave them all some chicken soup, moving them all into a double room so they'd all fit.

No one mentioned the fact that Richie's mother was nowhere to be found and Beverly's dad had never shown up, thank god.

Bill felt better after a hot bath, finally rid of the dirt and grime. His teeth had even gone back somewhat to normal, still sharp, but not as pointed as they had been. None of the doctors or nurses or even his own parents seemed to notice. Bill wasn't sure if he was getting better or if it was just like when It changed itself.

Bill was finally given water and drowned the whole cupful. He went through a whole pitcher before his mother tried to give him soup.

Bill shook his head vigorously. He didn't want to eat ever again. Not-he gagged.

His mother tried to coax some chicken soup and Ben told him it was really good while his father asked for more types of food. When his mother tried to spoon feed him the chicken soup Bill had thrown the whole plate across the room, nearly falling out of bed.

After that they let him have whatever he wanted without comment.

Finally Bill managed to keep down a couple spoonfuls of jello and some baby carrots.

The losers took turns sleeping and no one complained for they were silly children who had been through some amount of trauma. So the nurses and doctors let them.

Notes for the Chapter:

i think next chapter will probably go over what the losers were doing while bill was m.i.a. thoughts?

7. we need to talk about bill

It doesn't take long for things to go back to normal. For another child to missing while no one does anything, but put up posters over the last missing child's posters. It makes Bill want to scream.

As much as the losers want to spend the rest of their lives curled up in Bill's room eating grilled cheeses while watching cartoons, they know they'll have to go back down *there* and finish It.

He still won't eat any meat, something his parents and the losers figured out pretty quickly. And they still haven't asked. He wishes he could just forget it all, but he wakes up hungry, teeth sharp, and eyes aglow. He never stumbles in the dark.

His parents never seem to notice.

Stan still refuses to be left alone with Bill. He thinks he's being subtle, that Bill doesn't notice, but he does and he doesn't blame Stan. It was all his fault. If he hadn't let-If If If. It always came back to that.

But today Bev and Richie keep insisting that they're going to have fun, dragging Bill out of bed, and out to the quarry.

"Eds is bringing the snacks," Richie rambles off, "and swinging by Stan's and Ben is bringing Mike because he lives further out of town as you know and I told Eds to bring those chips that his mommy hides from him but he's also a sissy so I'm not sure that'll happen. . ."

For once, Bill's glad Richie never seems to shut up. He could listen to Richie talk about nonsense all day. Bev hums to herself as they ride on.

"-and we're meeting down in the field by Mike's farm. But I bet that Ed's won't want to go wait for us there because he has *allergies* but he didn't have them when he tackled me during gym last year now did he. Fake. Clearly a conspiracy from the start."

He nods along, not wanting to talk. Not wanting to risk it.

In his dreams, Bill was always back there, among bodies and blood

and when he woke up he hurt and his teeth were fangs again. Bill would have to lay there silently, biting back a scream, not wanting to wake Richie or Bev or Eddie. He'd lay there silently, unable to breathe. It was probably how Eddie felt during an asthma attack.

"You're mixtape are awful Richie!"

"No one asked you Claire Standish!"

Bill tires half way there and they have to take a break. He never used to get tired. He could ride silver all across town and back without ever stopping. He used to be able to go outside without spending the whole time looking around, looking at the drains as he walked on the other side of the street. It didn't matter how much he looked. He never sensed the clown there. But he knew It was still out there, buying Its time.

Beverly looks worried, she pats his back and Bill doesn't mean to flinch. "Are you okay?" No, not even close.

Bill tries to smile and nods.

"Shall I carry you my dear fair lady," Richie asks in what has to be the worst english accent ever.

His smile is real this time, "really guys I'm okay, just give me a minute." Bill wipes the sweat from his brow, and takes those deep long breathes Eddie is always on about before hopping back on his bike, "let's go or they'll think we never made it out of the house."

It was the first time since he'd gotten back from the hospital, two days ago, that Bill has gone outside. He still hadn't been left alone, and he was glad. He wasn't sure he ever wanted to be alone again.

Richie and Bev exchange looks but say nothing. Bill politely ignores them.

Only Mike and Ben are waiting there when they arrive. They're both laying down in the damp grass, flipping through one of Mike's books. Mike preferred non fiction to Ben's poetry collection, but they loved to exchange books with each other.

Ben looks up first. "Hey Beverly."

"What'd you bribe him with," Mike asks, closing his book carefully. Something about the binding and creases.

"Just promised him a go at Eddie's mom."

"Should've saved that for when Eddie was actually here dumbass," Beverly states.

"Comedic timing. Wouldn't expect you to understand it Andie." Richie's sneer is ruined by the bottle cap glasses he's wearing. Still cracked from that day.

"You think his mom wouldn't let him come," Ben asks.

Bill shrugs as they all go and sit down with Mike and Ben.

Just as they're settling down they hear the screech of tires and Eddie yelling.

"I'm going to fucking scalp you! Give you something to really fucking cry about cry baby!" Of course it's Bowers. They couldn't have even one day to themselves.

They all leap up, ready to make a run for it, or fight them off. Seven against three, how hard could it be?

Belch throws rock's at Eddie while Henry just slams against Stan, taking him down along with his bike.

"Back for more Bowers," Richie yells.

"Richie," Mike hisses. "Don't remind him."

"I'mma fuck you all up," Henry seethes, "starting with this fucking jew!" He grabs a fistful of Stan's curls dragging him across the ground.

No one ever does anything. They're just kids and no one ever cares.

Bill sees red.

He rushes at Henry, pulling him off of Stan with a strength he didn't know he had. Throwing Henry down, tackling him, hitting him with his fists over and over until there's blood streaming down from Henry's nose.

Henry's face is a mix of confusion and fear. Good. He deserves it after all he had done, not just to the losers, but to ever kid that knew to run away at the sight of Bowers.

He's aware of people screaming but they sound so far away.

The red in his vision collects into a balloon. *I love Derry*. The sound of it popping rings in Bill's ears even as he knows it's not real. It's a film over his senses, an illusion. It, in the corner of his eye, nodding

kill him billy

do it

He startles, backing off Bowers.

The rest of the Bower's gang is long gone.

His friends were screaming, Bill realizes. Stan looks terrified, but not at Bowers. Mike is whispering to Stan as Ben and keeps Beverly from coming any closer.

Without Bill to keep him down, Henry scrambles up and runs, not looking back once over his shoulder. Henry's blood coats Bill's knuckles and he has to keep himself from licking it even as his stomach rumbles.

"Billy," Beverly calls out carefully. Like you would to a wild hurt animal. It's more than Bill can take.

He looks away, biting at his lip, realizing too late that his teeth are knives again. Are his eye glowing too? Bill wants to cry, he wants to disappear. He curls up on the ground, trying to make himself as small as possible. The same as he would when It was in one of Its fits, seething and seemingly unaware of Bill's existence.

"Guy's he's still Bill," Richie pleads, "I mean would It save Stan from

Bowers? Come on. . .Eddie?”

“He was going to fucking kill him! We all saw him!”

“I’m sure he didn’t mean too,” Beverly adds, “who knows what Bill had to do to survive!”

“Exactly,” Mike says, “Who knows, but-“ he cuts off, shaking his head, “people don’t have glowing yellow eyes.”

“And fucking fangs.”

“Eddie,” Richie says, voice tight.

“He has a mouthful of shark teeth Richie! Let’s call it what it is.”

“Guys,” Ben snapped, “we all know what happened last time we fought!”

That shuts them all up.

“Bill.” It’s Richie. When he refuses to look up Richie comes closer, all the while rambling on about some girl he’d seen while buying tape for his glasses. It hadn’t helped the cracks.

He rubs Bill’s back, still talking about things that don’t really matter. The things that should have all their attention this summer, not the fucking demon clown. Bill finally builds up his nerve to look up. He must look awful, because Mike and Eddie step back. Stan doesn’t even look.

“Let’s go listen to Richie’s latest bad mixtape,” Ben tries.

“I saw that New Kids on the Block cassette,” Richie taunts.

“You wish your bands were as good as New Kids on the Block,” Beverly retorts, “at least they’re making fun music, not a bunch of trash.”

“Fuck off Samantha!”

“S-s-stan. . .”

Stan shakes his head, looking out at the field. "I . . I can't do this."

"Stan," Eddie calls out.

Stan hops on his bike, never once bothering to look at Bill.

"Stan we have to stick together man," Mike tries.

Stan stops for a second, finally looking at Bill, holding his gaze for a second before looking at the rest of the losers. "That thing isn't my friend." He rides off without another word. Bill can't keep the hurt look off his face. It's probably what they're all thinking.

"You better go with him," Ben tells Mike. "He'll listen to the voice of reason."

Bill starts shaking all over agin. He can't breathe, he can't. . .

Eddie shoves his inhaler into Bill's mouth with a quick, "I have extra's in my other fanny pack."

"How many fanny packs do you have?"

"Shut up Richie."

When Bill can finally breathe again, they ride off towards Ben's house. He has the biggest variety of music. Everything from the big bands of the twenties to the aforementioned New Kids on the Block.

They only make it to the ice cream parlor before Bill needs to catch his breath, face red and blotchy from peddling.

Mike pulls out a fiver, "my gramps is really happy I found friends to hang out with and not another book," and treats them all to some ice cream.

It's not a perfect day, but it feels that way to Bill.

Notes for the Chapter:

i wanted to give Mike a happy home life because he

deserves it. So yeah his grandfather can be overprotective ie homeschooling him, but he is happy for mike for having found friends. i really hope that u all get some of the foreshadowing going on here but if not. . .thoughts? next chapter might be up tomorrow, but if it is it'll go up pretty late

8. crushed

Summary for the Chapter:

in which bill continues to freak his friends out.

When Bill wakes up from his sleepover at Ben's house, he has a headache. It makes him want to bash his skull in. He gets up on unsteady legs, and goes to the bathroom. He runs the water, splashing it over his face, trying to shake it off.

He's still hungry. Even after going through all off Ben's fruit bowl. Like an itch he can never quite scratch. Bill feels the bile rising up through his throat and barely makes it to the toilet before retching up all the food he'd eaten.

He lays his head against the cool porcelain. Bill can almost hear Eddie yelling at him about the bacteria, but he'd been in worse places.

His eyes slid close and he can hear voices coming up from the pipes. Bill jerks away, rushing to get out, to get back to his friends.

Ben's mom serves them all cereal. She has all the brands in all their sugary glory, but Bill can't make himself eat even a spoonful. He ignores the other's stares and plays with his food until they finish.

He knows they have questions. They're always looking at him when they think he won't notice. But Bill notices everything these days. Every sound or quick movement startling him.

It's Mike who breaks first. Or rather, it was Mike who finally asks what everyone wants to.

"So what exactly happened down there Bill? I mean, no offense, but we were sure you'd been killed and eaten after so long."

"Mike," Beverly cuts in, "it doesn't matter Bill. What happened. What matters is you're here now." But Bill can tell she wants to know to. He can feel the prickling curiosity in her voice.

Bill shrugs, not wanting to tell them even though he has to sooner or later. He doesn't want them to back away from him like Stan had. Eddie had gone to spend the day with Stan. "We shouldn't leave anyone alone," Ben had said. And he was right.

Bill was glad the losers were trying to stick together, but for how long-he wanted more than anything not to have to tell them.

He took a deep breathe, willing himself to look as human as possible, hoping he could shift himself into a human boy rather than whatever he was now. Bill had spend countless moments looking into a mirror, trying to get control over his-

"Y-yuh-you d-deserve t-to k-knoh-know." He fixed his gaze right past his friends, locking onto one of Ben's many historical photographs.

"Bill--"

"S-s-shut fuck!" Bill's hands curl into fists by his side. Eyes well up in his eyes, but Bill refuses to cry. "I-I. . .I-i-it wuh-was t-terrible. I-I t-thh-thought," he shakes his head, hating his stutter. It didn't matter how many times his friends had said it was fine. It wasn't. Bill hated not being able to even talk. "I t-thoh-thought I wuh-was d-dead b-but It-IT w-was worse." He shook his head, tears finally falling down his cheeks. "IT made me do t-things--"

"What things," Ben prompted.

Bill meet his gaze. The words falling out of his mouth for once. "He made me eat them."

Mike's skin goes an interesting shade of green.

"I-i d-di-didn't w-want t-to. Y-yuh-you h-have to believe me. B-but--" he breaks off, breathes hitching. He can't get enough air down his lungs. "IT was going to kill you." Bill shakes his head, looking away from them, "I-I c-cou-couldn't let t-that--"

Bev holds his face between his hands, forcing him to look at her. "Breathe Bill. Take your time." But Mike's face is twisted in horror and disgust while Ben's stare tracks Bill, as if making sure Bill doesn't hurt Bev. He wouldn't-he would never hurt Beverly. Never hurt any

of them. But he isn't so sure after what he had done to Henry.

He doesn't want to risk looking at Richie.

"I-I w-wuh-woke up a-and and-" Bill let's go. Letting all those deep dark thoughts in the recess of his mind flow. Everything he hadn't let himself think about since being rescued. The way It had rubbed Bill's back as he choked down corpse flesh.

When he opens his eyes again he knows his eyes are aglow, teeth little more than fangs. He felt a change come over him, his bones settled for once. Bill aggressively ignores the hunger gnawing in his belly.

"I-It w-wanted to make me like. . .like IT"

Beverly pulls back, looking over at Ben, thoughts passing between them easily. Mike's eyes never leave Bill, but he won't quite meet his look either. *Just like Stan*. Just like Eddie had been so careful around Bill last night before volunteering to go stay with Stan.

He finally makes himself look at Richie. Richie whose eyes are somehow bigger than usual. Richie who can't take his eyes off Bill, horror written over his face, but at least he's still meeting Bill's gaze.

"I'm going to bash that fucking clown's skull in," Richie spits.

A wary smile comes over Bill's lips.

"If we kill It," Mike says, looking at them all, "then you'll be okay, right?"

Bill shrugs because he doesn't know for sure. He can only hope that's true. It's his only hope. "I-e-either way we h-ha-have t-to kill It," he finally says.

"We will," Beverly says with more conviction than any of them feel, "and you'll be fine. We all will."

"We won't let It hurt you," Ben says, "or anyone else."

None of them bring up the fact that Bill hadn't helped them fight It off. He had felt frozen, not in terror, but in something worse.

Something Bill didn't want to think about right now.

"At least now Bowers and his boyfriends won't be trying to fucking kill us like they did that cat." Bill could always count on Richie to make him feel better.

"That was never proven."

"Fuck Mike, you doubting that son of a bitch would kill a cat?"

"Not what I said Richie."

"If anyone was going to it would be Henry," Beverly said with a shudder.

"He did try carving his name on me."

"See," Richie screeched, "vindication ! my good man."

Bill knew they were all still unsettled. Richie had no better tell than his terrible impressions. But they were trying and what else could he ask for.

"Bill," Beverly said softly, "you're bleeding."

"W-wuh-what?"

"Your nose man," Mike said.

Sure enough, Bill felt a warmth running down his skin. When he went to wipe it away, his hand came back the pungent red of blood.

Notes for the Chapter:

i have the next chapter planned but i also have an exam on wed. so we'll see how it goes. bill has accepted his new normal so he can finally get a grip on his powers. I actually think that Bill would have killed Henry Bowers if Pennywise hadn't urged Bill on. It helped Bill get a grip ironically enough. stan will probably have a heart to heart with bill next chapter and maybe pennywise will drop by ;)

9. you dangle on the leash

“He was going to eat him!”

“He’s still our friend”

“We have to stick together! We’ve been over this for fuck’s sake!”

“What if he doesn’t get better?”

Bill pulled a clean shirt over his head. He had done his best to rinse out the blood from the other shirt. Not that his parents would notice. They hadn’t asked where he’d been last night even though he hadn’t let them know he was spending the night at Ben’s.

He ignored the voices drifting in from the hall. He knew it wasn’t his friends. He was looking at them waiting for him on the lawn. Richie and Eddie laying side by side.

Mike had to go help out at the farm and Bev loved it there. She mostly loved the part where they fed and chased the sheep into the fields and back into the barn. Running her fingers into their soft wool. They deserved the break.

Besides, he could feel eyes watching him from the bathroom. Bill hadn’t managed to work up the nerve to look. If he ignored It, It wasn’t there.

He was just paranoid.

He was just-

Bill looked up, and there was nothing there.

Shaking his head, he practically ran down the stairs, caught between not wanting to be left alone and wanting to be far away. Beverly had been so careful not to touch him, her hand hovering above his shoulder as she had said goodbye.

None of them knew what to say. And that was somehow worse than the terror clear in their eyes.

According to Eddie, Stan was thinking about coming around, and Bill held onto that hope. Stan was lots of things, hyper organized for one, but he wouldn't just forget them. Even if he didn't always show it, Bill knew Stan loved his friends. So he hoped that Stan would at least talk to him.

Or maybe once this was all over Stan would come back and it could be like it always was.

Like it had been.

Bill ran out so quickly he tripped right over the sea glass blue box with a bright red bow. It. Bill looked around, expecting It to jump out at him at any moment. But there was just his friends.

The note on the card was scrawled in the same messy handwriting as the blood in Beverly's bathroom had been. *Come home Billy.*

He took a gulp and opened it.

The smell hit him first. The pungent rot and metal in the air. His mouth watered. In the perfectly wrapped box, laid a generous piece of flesh. Bill knew from experience that it was part of a leg.

His belly rumbled and his mind going blank as he brought it up to his lips-

Richie smacked the corpse flesh out of his hands. "What the fuck!"

He growled without thinking, angry and hungry and how dare this human-

They both flinched. Eddie pulling Richie back and away from Bill. They tripped over themselves to get away from him.

Bill ignored them as he went back for the chunk of flesh now laying on the ground. His teeth sharpened in anticipation. He reached down, dusting the dirt off.

"You're not supposed to eat things strangers give you Bill," Stan called out, cutting right through Bill. "It could have glass in it or did you sleep through the video like Richie."

Jolting he let the corpse flesh fall from his hands. Bill looked up at Stan who was carefully putting the kickstand up on his bike even as Ben had just let it fall on the lawn.

“You sound like Eddie,” Bill said with an uneasy smile.

“Do you have a glove or something?” Stan looked over at Eddie from his sad attempt to hide Richie behind him. Eddie who had yet to hit his growth spurt and had always been the slightest of the boys.

“Do not fucking touch that! Do you have any idea how many diseases and bugs start eating away at dead people!”

“Eddie! Now,” Stan snapped.

Bill didn’t trust himself, holding himself still, not wanting to know what he’d do. He’d wanted to attack *his friends* for taking-for not letting him eat that thing. After all they’d done for him.

Maybe it would have been better if he’d just stayed down in the sewers.

Stan yanked the disinfectant wipe from Eddie’s hand and went to pick the hunk of flesh up, holding it as far from him as he could and walked over to the nearest drain.

“Stan what the hell!”

“Stan.”

Bill simply followed.

Ben obviously knew what Stan was up to because he didn’t ask questions. He just grinned.

Stan promptly shoved the flesh down into the drain and pulled back quickly.

“Stan the man,” Richie called out approvingly, adding in some suggestive whistles.

“You’re not some chick during spring break Richie,” Stan said, rolling

his eyes before looking over at Bill.

He had calmed down. Letting his eyes dull along with his teeth shift back. He didn't quite trust himself near his friends yet. What if next time he really hurt them?

He would never forgive himself.

"T-t-thanks," Bill managed.

Stan nodded, "Ben told me everything. And it sounds horrible but," he paused, taking a deep breathe before continuing. "You freak me out. I don't even know what you are anymore. I don't know what I'm supposed to say or how to even begin to act around you. But I'm going to see this through to the end."

It was something.

Bill wasn't surprised. He knew no matter how much they all tried to act normal that at the end of the day, he freaked them all out. Hell, he freaked himself out.

He looks over at Richie and Eddie, both still skittish. "I-I'm s-sss-sorry. I-I'm h-hun-hungry," he admits flushing red with shame. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches just weren't doing it for him. It was something Bill had known for a while, but he hadn't realized just how hungry he was until Pennywise's *present*.

"I think I know what to do about that," Ben says, finally speaking up. "Me and Mike were talking and we think-" he very carefully glanced around, aware how badly they could all take this and not wanting to make Bill feel bad for things that were out of his control, "we think you need to eat meat."

At the freaked out expressions of the rest of the losers, Bills burning red in shame, Ben added, "not that it has to be people. Maybe just something raw. Mike said he could get you something from his farm and," he continued looking right at Bill, "you could be there so you know it's not-y'know."

"But we think that's why you've been tiring out so quickly."

Stan glances around, before his gaze settles on Bill, “Wouldn’t that just make it worse.”

“I think we should try it because I’d like not to get eaten by my best friend,” Eddie looks over at Bill, “no offense Billy.”

“I-It’s ooo-okay,” He says shrugging, because what else is he supposed to say. He doesn’t want to hurt anyone, not like It, but he almost had. Bill had almost hurt the people closest to him and he didn’t want that to happen again.

“I don’t think it’ll make it worse,” Ben adds, “I think as long as it’s not-as long as people that Bill won’t get worse.”

“So what are we waiting for my good men, pip pip old sports!”

“What is that even supposed to be?”

“Your mom Stan my man.”

Stan rolls his eyes as he goes over to his bike. They all set off on their way to Mike’s farm.

They have to take four breaks because of Bill. He feels so winded, sweat dripping down his skin even as he barely peddles faster than he has to. They have to slow down for him, wait on him as he catches his breathe just to tire out faster the next time.

Bill hates being this weak. He had felt such a surge on energy when he had been about to-

Beverly is stinging flower chains together and covering Mike in her handiwork when they finally get there. Mike is careful to stand, making sure he doesn’t lose any of the flower chains.

“You know lot’s of bugs hide in flowers,” Eddie says, “do you have any idea what diseases some bugs carry. Ticks especially.”

“I think I’ve got the whole milkmaid immunity going on, but thanks.”

Mike and Ben exchange looks while Beverly and Richie try to put a flower crown on Eddie.

“I-I w-woo-wouldn’t h-have hu-hurt them,” Bill mutters, looking over at Stan. He’s carefully finding a spot to leave his bike unlike all the losers.

“You don’t know that,” Stan replies, lips drawn thin, “you’re dangerous Bill. I know it’s not your fault, but that doesn’t change things.”

Mike motions him over and Richie and Bev immediately make to follow, but Bill doesn’t actually want them there. “G-g-guys,” he says shaking his head.

Beverly nods and drags a skeptical Richie away and back to the others.

Mike motions him over and he follows him to where they keep the dead sheep. There are many hooks hanging from the ceiling, but only a few sheep hanging about. There’s all little more than meat waiting to be taken to market. It smells off to Bill. He doesn’t feel the same hunger rise at the smell of the sheep’s meat.

Ben’s face is twisted in disgust, “I might become a vegetarian after this.”

Mike laughs, “I was one for like a week but then my grandmother made some fried chicken and I sort of forgot about it.” Glancing at Bill he asks, “any particular cut?”

Bill doesn’t trust himself to speak so he just shakes his head.

Mike picks up a butcher’s knife that looks way to big for him to handle, but he hacks at the carcass with an expertise that comes from being raised on a farm. He hands the slab off to Bill.

It’s then that Bill realizes how unappetizing it is. But what is he supposed to say? That he’d prefer if it was someone. He has to at least try because he won’t be like It. He won’t risk hurting his friends.

He let’s his teeth grow sharp, biting a chunk out and chewing the still bloody meat. Bill hates to admit it, but it’s not good. It just isn’t. But it’s filling at least and it’s not terrible and it doesn’t come with the

same guilt that usually came after feeding with It. It that would wipe the tears away and tell him to focus on the sweet sweet fear infused in the corpse flesh. Then It would curl up with Bill, lounging about as It's hunger was satiated for a little while, before the next meal.

When he was done, he felt better. Full. Bill wiped the blood from his lips with the back of his hand, and forced himself to look at his two friends.

“Better?”

“Y-y-eah, b-but can I-I have uh-a-an apple?”

Notes for the Chapter:

lol stan is the only one not dancing on eggshells around bill but i think this chapter did a lot to fix that bc they were confronted with Bill's otherness directly. pennywise next chapter. It has sort of been present in this chapter too but It actually interacts with Bill next chapter.

10. always alone, always afraid, always angry

Summary for the Chapter:

What did that make him?

Selfish.

An accomplice.

A monster.

Bill gasped from breathe, pulled out of his dreams, soaked in blood and grime and the prevalent feeling of unease. Always the sewers. Always back with It. He was starting to doubt they were dreams.

His shirt was damp with sweat as he tried to catch his breath: heart pounding in his chest. The whole room was spinning, nothing was right. Everything was too much. Always too much and he couldn't think.

The silence of the dawn just seemed to make everything worse. Made every little noise stick out even more, sending his pulse racing.

Mike was still asleep on the floor in a pile of blankets by the side of his bed. Beverly next to him on the spare mattress that had once been Bill's. He was surprised he hadn't woken her. She was such a light sleeper. Richie and Eddie had woken her up countless times because of their usual yelling. Eddie always took forever to fall asleep because apparently there were wrong was to sleep.

Bill focused on his breathing, trying to stop the short choked breaths and shaking limbs. He didn't even jump when It stepped out from the shadows. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he had known It was there, just waiting to be noticed.

It wagged Its gloved finger at Bill as if he had done something wrong. Like he was a child acting out.

He didn't even think to scream.

He had to get It out of here and away from his still sleeping friends. He had no doubt It would kill them given half the chance. And he couldn't have that. This time, it would truly be his fault.

It came to rest next to Bill, rubbing circles into his back as Bill tried to calm down, eyes crystal blue. It giggled softly, finger tapping his nose as if sharing a secret with him. Bill kept still, not wanting to risk provoking it.

There was an underlying annoyance to the sewer clown. An anger shimmering just beneath the surface. So Bill reached out with his arms toward the clown and his grimy white outfit. It was a mockery of what a clown really was. The monstrosity that It was bleeding through.

"No, sweet child," It whispered through stifled giggles, "that we are. That you will be. Eternal."

A shiver ran down Bill's spine at Its words. The implications that Bill knew were true. He had even admitted it to the losers. He was hungry, and not for human food, not anymore.

He nestled into Pennywise, clutching at the ruffles and feeling so small and young despite nearly being a teenager. His rasping breathes slowly evened out as the soft morning light streamed in from his windows.

Bill looked up at the clown, eyes wide and waiting for the inevitable shoe to drop. Sure enough, the clown's eyes grew cold and hard as red filled the irises. Its hands elongating into claws that trailed down the side of Bill's face just enough to break the skin, stinging just like a thousand paper cuts. Beads of blood formed along the scrapes.

Its smile, cold and hard, as it held Bill's head in place digging into his skin, making sure it hurt. Bill let out a whine. And It finally released him, having found what it was looking for.

It brought the bloody claws up to its mouth, and carefully lapped up the blood. Bill's blood. Smiling ever so sweetly before looked right at Bill. "Where did your lovely eyes go little one?"

“O-oh.”

Bill what he imagined in his head to be a switch, his features sharpening into something not quite human.

“Are you going to behave now dear child? Or are we going to have to use force? You wouldn’t want your stupid little *brats* to float? Or would you,” It said with a giggle, juxtaposing the very real threat It had just uttered.

Pennywise stood up from its perch on Bill’s bed, before holding out a hand. There was really nothing Bill could do. And in a way, he was glad. No more waiting for It to come back and do something terrible: the dread and anticipation giving way. It was much like finally taking the plunge at the quarry. It was worse to be up there on the cliff, seeing the water from way up high and freaking out than when you finally jumped.

Bill took Its hand and tried not to think about what came next.

“Let’s go get you some real sweet flesh,” It wheezed, pulling Bill right along with it not waiting for Bill to even look for shoes.

He glanced at his friends only to realize they were awake, eyes wide, not knowing what to do. Bill hoped they’d go get the others. They had waited too long. Waited on Bill to get better when they should have gone to kill It.

Pennywise whisked Bill off into the street. Cold morning air hitting his skin, made worse by his damp shirt. His pajamas doing little in the way of warmth.

He took a deep breathe, and braced himself for whatever the clown had planned.

They walked along the empty streets, the occasional morning jogger’s eyes passing right through them. Were they invisible? Bill knew It could make people see what It wanted. He supposed It was extending that to him.

Pennywise halted right outside Victor Criss’ dilapidated home. Weeds grew wild all over the lawn, a broken down lawn mower on

its side by the fence. Rusted cans littered the doorway.

The same gut wrenching heartache Bill got whenever he was at Richie's and his parents started fighting filled him. It didn't excuse Victor's behavior, but he couldn't fully blame him either.

It pulled a balloon out of the air, handing the string off to Bill. "Go on child, I've held off waiting for you."

Bill's stomach plummeted. He shook his head slowly, looking at It. He'd never had to-he didn't want to. He remembered the shocked and scared look on the loser's faces after what he had done to Henry. He remembered the fear in Henry's eyes. Fear at him.

"It was glorious my dear one," It croaked, "I was so sssure you'd do it right then. But then those brats. . ." It trailed off, slobber trailing down its jaw. It's whole body convulsed in annoyance before fixing its gaze on Bill once more, with both eyes for once. "But eh, you've got to start somewhere," It smiled encouragingly, fangs sticking out from its lips. He poked Bill's chest for emphasis before shoving him towards the door.

He gulped, glancing back at the clown before trying the door. It was open. He was careful to not make any noise as he stepped inside.

No.

He knew he wouldn't make any noise.

Therefore he wouldn't make noise.

Mind over matter.

The inside of the house was not as bad as the outside. It was clean for once. But there were obvious signs of need. The couches so worn the stuffing stuck out. He couldn't make out the original color of the carpet from years of stains and use.

He swallowed, looking for Victor.

Bill tried to remind himself how many times Victor had hurt his friends. How many times he had pushed Eddie over before throwing

his medication into the trash. When he'd ripped the diorama Stan had spent days perfecting.

He didn't want to do this.

Vic wouldn't even see it coming before it was too late. He wouldn't see it coming because *he couldn't*.

Victor Criss found him first.

"Denbrough? What the fuck are you doing here?" He was already dressed, rubbing the sleep from his eyes as he ate a granola bar, a store brand granola bar. His platinum blonde hair still sticking up from twisting and turning in the night. Bill could feel the wariness coming off of him. Vic was scared, scared of Bill.

He could almost taste it in the air.

"Yuh-you're awake?"

Victor nods. "The junkyard pays me to sort out the recycling stuff. But its really fucking early."

Bill takes a step towards him, not feeling very much like a boy at all.

Criss watches him carefully, eyeing the bright red balloon. "So what the fuck got into you? You look really fucked up man? Messed Bower's up pretty good. He really wants to murder you now."

He watched as the clown appeared behind Victor, tapping his wrist. Its smile had never looked less friendly. Strings of drool coated its lips.

"O-oh."

"You're fucked man," he told Bill as they walked out the door together.

Suddenly Bill had such a strong urge to warn Victor. But he wouldn't risk It harming his friends. What did that make him?

Selfish.

An accomplice.

A monster.

When Victor turned away from Bill he was faced with the rotting corpse of Patrick Hocksetter. Maggots coated Patricks eyes, worms falling out of his mouth.

Vic screamed, scrambling back.

Bill froze. Unable to stop It.

The sweet sweet smell of fear and blood in the air.

Vic tripped over himself to get away as It went over to him, maw reaching out taking a chunk right out of his throat cutting the scream off into a gurgling croaks. Patrick slid away, Pennywise turning to look at Bill with a grin.

“Come, eat.”

Victor’s body was still twitching; chest heaving, and blood soaking the dead grass.

The hunger that had awoken in Bill, that had never really gone away, didn’t matter. Bill leaned over and retched.

It rolled Its eyes, throwing the soon to be corpse over It’s shoulder and inching a finger at Bill to follow.

Notes for the Chapter:

It was not happy with Bill. Lol basically scolding Bill like what even. I pictured Bill trailing after It like a duckling tbh. Bill might have been creating illusions in this chapter.

11. not again, not again, please not again

Fourteen days ago

Beverly Marsh had faced her worst fear. She had taken and beat her daddy with the same belt he had once used on her mother before she had left. Left Beverly behind.

There was nothing the sewer clown could do to her now.

*

When she looks into Its eyes. Her mind goes blank blank blank

There is something-

things that should not-

her mind struggles to understand what she's seeing and all the while her sanity fries.

This is your brain on drugs.

Beverly looks beyond Its eyes and-

*

It's distant and faded and so much like the warm feeling she'd get whenever the losers would invite her along. When her mother would take Beverly out of the house and they'd spend the entire day reading poems while laying on a blanket far far away from her daddy.

Beverly please wake up.

But she doesn't want to because-

She doesn't-

Her mind screams, the pieces won't come together. It. It. IT.

Bright bright orange lights behind rows and rows and rows of teeth. Anything but human. Not of this world. Not of this universe. The

bleak cold and-

Like squishing her mind to pulp.

“B-beverly.”

The warmth blocks out all other-It.

Sunshine and soft smiles and “we never believed that.”

Bill.

Bill Denbrough.

The losers.

Beverly wakes up to a nightmare, but Bill is there. Stupid kid didn't go get the rest of them. Beverly wakes up to Bill's wide blue eyes, scarred and worried. And no, why can't she save him. She never wanted this.

She cries as she races out of the sewers, ready to turn back at the first scream from Bill. But it never comes.

She crawls out of the first exit she finds, not wasting a second before heading to find Ben and Richie and Mike and Eddie and Stan.

They have to help.

It was Bill.

Who didn't love him?

*

They all think he's a goner. Dead.

Stan doesn't even want to listen, eyes choked with tears.

But she makes them. Richie helps her convince them, they can't just abandon Bill when he was so ready to save one of them. And if Richie was going, then so was Eddie. Surprisingly Mike is easily swayed, steeling himself to go back to the house on Neibolt St.

They come together and search. They come together, prepared to kill Pennywise with Mike's gun and iron stakes.

Stan's hand slips into Mike's as they wander around the sewers. Beverly swears they've changed since the last time she was here. It had been so easy getting out. Maybe It didn't want to be found.

Maybe It was toying with them.

And after days, days of more missing children, she can feel them giving up hope. Even Richie who had been the first to argue for racing down into the sewers grows quiet.

It's been days. Surely It has eaten-

No. She won't think it. He has to be alive. She won't let him be another missing kid's poster, not after he had come looking for her. More heart than head. Beverly who had no one else in the world but her friends.

*

They change tactics.

Mike is the one to suggest keeping Pennywise from taking more kids and cornering It. Making It take them to Bill and killing it.

If Pennywise was avoiding them, that meant It was scared of them? Right?

If they couldn't find Its lair again, then they would find It.

And they do.

After so many missed calls.

Derry's a small town. The losers know which kids are easy targets. Kids like them. With no one in the world to look after them. At least she has the losers. Mike's grandfather had opened his doors for her until they can track down her next of kin.

Ben's mother had made her soup, taking Beverly aside and letting her

cry. Her daddy might have been a different kind monster than the one they were hunting, but he had still been her dad. The one she had screamed for when It had tried to kill her.

They drive It, looking like a rabid dog, off a small girl who doesn't stop crying, skin blotchy and red until Stan let's her ride his bike home. The bike he's always so careful with. Paint still gleaming like it had been bought yesterday.

They chase it all the way to the house on Neibolt St. Down the old well house all the way to Its lair, never letting up. It tries to attack Stan but Mike is ready for It. Richie swinging wildly.

Beverly makes sure Eddie and Ben don't fall behind. They're the losers. They look after each other.

They chase the sewer clown all the way to Its lair and lose It.

The others are mesmerized by the horrifying bodies floating like a demonic crib mobile, going around and around. The pile of trophies, things taken from its victims, just makes it worse.

But Bill isn't floating-isn't there.

That means he has to be alive.

*

Now

They wait, making sure It won't hear them, before getting up and running to get the others.

Beverly barely has time to be freaked out about-

Bill hand't even screamed. Or looked scared.

She didn't want to think about what that meant.

Not right now.

God, they should have fucking killed the clown as soon as they got

the chance. They should have gone down and bashed Its head in. Richie had been right for once.

Mike does the talking, having a way with adults, explaining why they're out and about this early. Why they *really* need Ben and Stan right now. Eddie and Stan meet them there.

Beverly hadn't even paused to ask the Denbrough's if she could use their phone. Bill's parents may as well have been ghosts in their own home. She hadn't even heard Bill's mom speak.

Not since she'd cried at the hospital.

"It's taken Bill," Beverly stammers out. Saying it out loud makes it worse, makes it real, makes it more true. God, what was the point of them being there if they hadn't stopped it.

She chokes back a sob.

Ben reaches for her, pulling her into a hug.

"And what were you dicks doing? Sleeping," Richie says, voice cracking. His glasses are crooked on his nose. Shoes still untied, only Stan looks somewhat put together. But then that's Stan's armor the same way Eddie takes puff after puff of his inhaler.

"Richie," Stan hisses.

Mike shakes his head, "It didn't hurt him. Not-I mean IT did. But-Bill didn't he didn't-"

"He was confused," Beverly explains away. But her words sound hollow to her own ears. Bill had reached for It, hugging It, seeking comfort and then walking off into the morning.

Mike gives her a sad look. "He was trying to keep It from hurting us." He sounds sure of it. Mike is-well he's Mike. Patient and kind, and more understanding than anyone she's ever met.

He says its from spending all his time with the animals.

"Well what the fuck are we waiting for then," Eddie says, "Let's go

before that thing makes Bill eat more people!”

They all march out with grim looks, taking whatever works as a weapon from Ben’s house. An old field hockey stick for Beverly. An iron bar for Eddie and Stan. The only two flashlights that aren’t dying. Ben carries out a hammer that probably won’t be missed, having been at the back of the bathroom sink.

Richie starts to go for the kitchen knives before Eddie pulls him away, shoving him out the door.

She hates that Mike has the gun. Has been carrying it around, ready for It. She hates what Pennywise has done to them.

But she doesn’t mind that It brought them together. And now they were going to kill It and Bill would be fine and they’d never have to walk around always on their toes.

They could go back to eating ice cream and having sleepovers just for the sake of hanging out and not because of a monster prowling the sewers.

Notes for the Chapter:

and part 2 begins. next chapter will be bill and pennywise's very fun time down in the sewers then the final confrontation (will probably be one very long chapter or two chapters) and an epilogue

thoughts?

12. you will be damaged and scarred, you will continue to hunger

The further they went into the sewer, the harder it was for Bill to remember why eating Vic's bloody body was a bad idea. The scent of rot and decay and gray water was drowned out by the sweet warm smell of blood in the air. Bill could hear the boy's heart give out after entering the sewer. The beating slowing until eventually it just stopped.

It had a point about the scent of fear. Bill's teeth sharpened despite himself in anticipation.

He tried not to cringe as he bare feet had stepped into the fetid water covering the floor along with whatever trash had gotten washed in. The cold of the water and sewers themselves leached into his skin.

Bill sucked at his lip, trying to hold on. He thought of his friends horrified faces, of Eddie and Richie, as he had wanted to feed on flesh. He thought of Ben's hesitance to meet his eyes directly.

It led them to the chamber where the bodies floated around Its hoard. The top wasn't quite right. Bill could feel it in the air, as if the chamber had been stretched beyond.

The bright bright orange behind Its eyes.

Victor's still warm corpse fell on the floor with a thunk, echoing around the chamber. It ripped a chunk out of Victor's ribcage, spraying blood across the room, the warm crimson liquid splashing Bill even as he stepped back, before lifting the body up up up. And as if by an invisible sting, the corpse continued all the way up, joining the macabre carousel.

Bill pushed down the pang of disappointment.

"Ah, don't worry *my* little one," Pennywise rasped, his grin revealing his many teeth as usual, "I have a *special* treat for you." It moved to Bill's side with a few long strides, gripping his shoulders, "you *did* like my last present, did you not?"

He gulped, before nodding, not wanting to know what any other response would be met with. More pain, more blood, more tears. There always seemed to be a new low to hit. The sewer clown had already made him kill Victor, and that had been unprovoked.

No, he thought, he would have killed Vic anyway. Better him than Bev. Better him than any of the losers.

Pennywise intertwined Its gloved hand with Bill's, before leading him to another part of the sewers. Its glove was slick with blood, staining Bill's own small pale hand red. Even through the glove, Bill could feel not cold, but a lack of warmth, a lack of anything that was alive gave off. The closest his mind could come to would be the same feeling as you would get if you dipped your hand into a black hole.

It hummed some rhythmless song as It led Bill through the sewers.

He let himself be led.

He let himself be led right into a trap.

Zack Denbrough lay amiss broken bones and sewage. His leg lay at an odd angle, face pale with fear.

Bill forgot all the month of being ignored at best and yelled at for little more than existing. He forgot all the tears and screams he'd shed even as his father pretended not to notice. As his father wanted *closure* and to forget Georgie like he had never exist.

Like Bill had died along with Georgie.

He made to run over to his dad's side, even as his dad flinched away from them.

It dug his fingers into Bill's shoulders, slicing right through the cotton fabric into his skin. He cried out in pain, blood staining his white shirt.

He looked over at his dad, only to see the man attempting to crawl away.

Somehow this hurt more than anything.

The clown crunched down so he could whisper into Bill's ear, "how do you like my present little one?"

"I know humans can be so complicated," It sneered, "with all their emotions running all over the place, "but soon." It pressed Its painted white cheek against Bill's hair. "Soon soon soon, all that will go away, and there will be nothing but internal indulgence. It will be so much easier. I promise." It pressed its lips against the auburn locks of Bill's hair, in some semblance of a kiss, before letting him go.

Bill stifled a screamed as the claws were dislodged from his skin, blood free to ooze out.

"Now kill the man responsible for ssweet dear Georgie's death. The man who wouldn't even go out into the storm to look for his child," It shook Its head, closing Its eyes before adding in a mock solemn tone, "aa terrible parent."

"Even now he tries to save his own skin."

It pushed Bill at his father, "kill him my little one, tear the flesh from his bones like he tore through yours."

Bill walked forward, caught in a trance, towards where Zack Denbrough lay, a broken man. A child should never see their parents like this. A child should never see their parents afraid of them, features twisted in revolt and confusion. He felt so far away from himself, so far from the boy with a stutter and a brother and only three friends.

He felt powerless to stop himself in his own skin. It eased the guilt, if he didn't let himself think. If he lost himself in the moment.

His father's eyes flickered from Pennywise to Bill, afraid to utter a word, drawing back as he grew closer. He studied the soiled hem of his pajamas, wet and putrid brown from the sewer, the blood seeping slowly from the wounds on his chest and on his cheek, and finally settled on his dim yellow eyes.

"B-bill?"

Bill remembered once upon a time when he wouldn't want to speak to his parents. His father had been convinced that his stutter was a childhood habit even as his mom had wanted to go see someone. So convinced that the older he grew without losing his stutter, the angrier his father had gotten at hearing it. There had been therapy and talking and understanding, later.

Bill knew it wasn't really his fault Georgie had died. Not really. He was just a kid. He shouldn't have his brother's death on his shoulders. His brother shouldn't even be dead.

He shook his head, standing over his dad's shaking body, feeling hot angry tears well up in his eyes.

"Son I-"

When Zack Denbrough look back at the thing that had dragged him here, he didn't see the clown, he saw Georgie grinning with glee, a glee that wasn't human much less a child's, before he felt Bill's teeth sink into his chest, fingers digging into his ribcage with a supernatural strength. He screamed, feeling his skin give way, feeling teeth tear through muscle. He couldn't stop screaming even if he had wanted to, the pain blotting out any rational thoughts.

He couldn't look away from his younger son, even if it wasn't really him. Still in his yellow raincoat that had once been Bill's. Other children might have been annoyed to get their older siblings hand me downs, but Georgie had insisted on them when they had gone through boxes and boxes of old clothes and things during the summer before-

Zack screamed as his older son, his only son now, if it even was his son, tore his flesh with his sharp sharp teeth, mouth bloody. He tried in vain to push the preteen off of him, but Bill was much too strong for him, hands gripping onto his ribcage so hard he wouldn't have been surprised if the bone cracked. His hands desperately tried to pry Bill off of him even as the boy growled at him before returning to his task.

All his yells and struggles proved useless as his son tore through the flesh of his chest once more, teeth scrapping bone, before greedily

swallowing down the strips of meat. His expression animalistic and hungry as he practically moaned, gorging himself on Zack. His eyes weren't tracking. The dim glow of them cast the boy's face into an eerie light. There wasn't much anything in Bill's expression that seemed *there*.

Zack let his eyes stare at the ceiling of the sewer tunnel. He thought about how sewers shouldn't be this big. Why hadn't he ever wondered about that?

He realized he was going to die here.

His son, or the thing resembling his son, was eating him alive.

Zack started sobbing as the boy he had taught to ride a bike tore his throat out, blood spraying, coating the walls red.

The giggling of the damn clown echoed around the chamber.

It was the last thing Zack Denbrough heard.

Notes for the Chapter:

sorry for the long wait. life happened. tis originally was supposed to be way longer but i think this makes more sense for it to cut off. next chapter will be the final confrontation. also bill deals with what he's done. so yeah pennywise pretty much wants to be the only thing bill has left. more on why bill's mom survived later.

13. there is no turning back from it

Bill's whole body shakes as he sobs into the corpse of his dad. He can't stop the tears from running down his cheeks, burning his eyes. He can't stop seeing red. His whole body is exhausted with everything.

Monster.

Monster.

Monster.

He wants it to end.

He leans over and retches, blood and flesh and the body was still warm.

Again, he retches, body heaving until nothing more will come out. His chest hurts, burning, bones brittle.

Bill could almost collapse into his own vomit, too tired to move, too tired to find out what nightmares awaited him.

Would it ever end?

He can't bring himself to think of his friends, he no longer cares about protecting them. He just wants out. He wants to never have heard of Derry or It or anything.

His hands come away red, and he doesn't know if it's his blood or his dad's.

He just wants to be a boy again whose biggest problem was avoiding the Bower's gang.

Monster.

Bill clutches his head in his hands, trying to think, trying to more than sit in a mess of blood, vomit, and gray water. He pounds his fists against his head, his walls echoing around the chamber.

The hairs on the back of his neck rise as he senses It drawn near. Bill squirmed away, slipping through It's grasp.

No more.

He can't take much more.

"C H I L D," It hisses.

But Bill has already bolted, away far away into the depths of the sewers. He can't stop shaking. He just needs to get away. Far away.

He doesn't think about where he's going.

Somehow he still ends up back *there*, as if It was calling to him.

It's lair.

Bill pulls at his hair in despair, collapsing onto his knees. He can't stop crying. He can't-

He doesn't want to think about what he'd done. That he'd liked it.

It draws near, but Bill can't stand up again. Heavy and tired and so so exhausted, he's not sure where he'd even go. Not back to his friends, not like this.

Pennywise drags him up by his shirt collar, sneering, "ssstill you insist on clinging to you're *weak* human emotions." It shakes him, his head flopping. He can't-

"Do you not see the gift I have given you? The honor?"

Bill can't do much more then cry, lip trembling as he tries to focus on anything but the clown.

"You are mine and you are like me and you will be eternal. Thingss your little human mind can't even imagine," It spit as it croaked, slobber soaking It's ruffled costume.

"W-wuh-what i-if I-I ddon't wuh-want t-this," Bill cried, meeting Its eyes, so like his own. He had half the mind to spit at It, surely It

would kill him then in one of Its fits of rage and madness.

“Ohhhhh but you do,” It purred making Bill flinch away, “your already hungry and changing and soon you will know nothing but appetite.”

“W-why m-me?”

It would have been better if the clown had just eaten him and gone to sleep. His friends would be safe and he would have died. Anything was easier than this.

It couldn't hurt him anymore if It was dead.

“Because you were so so angry and ready to die and play hero! You thought you could kill *me*,” It dissolved into mad bad laughter, choking on its giggles, dropping Bill, “Not even the turtle-,” It broke off, filling the chamber with Its laughter.

It laughed and laughed, mouth widening to Its ears, fangs sticking out. Was It revealing more of Its mouth, or was It growing more teeth?

“Get away from him you stupid fucking clown!”

Richie!

Bill turned to look at him in all his glory. Pink Hawaiian shirt and cracked glasses, clutching an ancient baseball bat. Bill's stomach lurched, he didn't want to know how this would end.

It would never end.

The growl emanating from the monstrous creature was the only warning that they got before It lunged at Richie, right as the rest of the losers entered the lair.

Mike took aim and missed, the gun going off like thunder. A sharp bang echoing throughout the chamber.

Pennywise knocked Richie down, bat falling out of his hand, before biting a chunk out of his leg. Ignoring the other kids.

Eddie was already on It, hitting It's back over and over. "Let. Go. Of. Him. You. Stupid. Clown." He didn't even care as gray water splashed on him, cast covered with the signatures of his friends all around the word "Lover." Ben and Bev tried to pry It off of Richie, clawing at It, gripping It's costume and pulling and hating and screaming.

"Shitty Clown!"

"Fucker!"

Mike reloaded his gun, calm even in the chaos. They weren't scared kids anymore. They were going to end this right here and right now.

Even Stan took hits at the sewer clown, yelling in yiddish until his voice broke.

Bill closed his eyes, willing himself into action.

It had all started with Pennywise. It wasn't his fault. Not his fault Goergie had died or even his parents. How many times had Goergie gone out on his own without any trouble? How many nights had Bill walked home from Stan's alone knowing there was nothing to fear in the dark, nothing in the shadows?

It was the clown. It had all started with the fucking clown. The clown that had robbed them of playing in the streets, never caring or even wondering if they were safe. It had killed his baby brother. It had dragged Georgie down into the sewer.

Georgie who had never worried about a thing because he'd never had too. Because Derry was a town where everyone knew everyone and the kids were allowed to ride their bikes all over town even after dark until It had woken back up.

But no more.

There would be no more Georgie's or Patrick's or Betty's.

The losers would make sure of that.

Bill would make sure of that, because he was and always would be a loser. And just because he wasn't human anymore didn't mean he

would be like It. He would show It that he had made a mistake in making Bill stronger, in making Bill like It.

Bill got up and went to tear Pennywise off of Richie, pinning It down, yelling as he pushed the sewer clown. Ben and Mike each took an arm, wrestling It still, keeping It from attacking them, faces angry and done with IT. Stan stabbed at It's legs, keeping It down, smothering Its intense struggles.

Eddie stayed by Richie's side, blood seeping from his leg, looking through his fanny pack for something to help Richie with. Richie yelled a string of curses as Eddie threw hydrogen peroxide on the open wound before covering it tightly in gauze, keeping him from bleeding out.

Pennywise opened It's monstrous maw and Bill placed his hands right on the many sharp teeth, keeping It from closing It's jaw. Keeping It defenseless. He ignored the pain as the teeth slicing through his hands, and focused on all the hurt and death this thing had caused.

No more.

Mike took aim, shooting It in the crotch, reloaded and fired another into It's leg, weakening the creature.

It's movements turned agitated. Bill could sense Its fear and distress. He smelled blood in the air, and for once it was not a child. Sweet sweet fear.

"I-if you kill me," It sniveled, "you'll kill dear little Billy too."

He felt Beverly stiffen, halting her attacks.

"F-ff-fuck off," Bill yelled before ripping the clown's tongue out. It bleed black brackish gunk, splattering Bill and Bev.

"Kill it!"

"Kill It!"

"Shoot It Mike!"

“Wait,” Beverly said, “We need to make sure It really dies.” She then looked right down into Its throat, right at the bright bright lights at the back.

“What the fuck!”

“Beverly!”

Bill watched as she leaned into Its gullet, careful not to scrape herself of Its teeth, as Bill held Its jaws opened, blood staining Its white teeth red.

And then she wasn't really there. Her eyes glazed over. She looked just like she had that day that seemed so long ago now. It had only been two weeks. It might as well have been a lifetime.

Bill cried out, furious at what It had done to them.

They were just kids.

They shouldn't have to be doing this.

It was fucking summer!

He hadn't even been aware he was yelling until Stan rubbed his back, His fists coming down hard on Its chest, beating and hitting and cracking the bones underneath with the strength that It had gifted him.

The same power he had now turned on It.

His tears finally ran out. Chest heaving, breathes shallow.

“Hurry the fuck up because I need a fucking hospital,” Richie yelled.

They looked at Beverly, at the black lines appeared on Its face, like cracks in porcelain.

Mike handed Bill his gun. He had one shot left.

“It should be you.”

Beverly shook her head slowly, coming back for where ever she had

been, bright orange and black and places that made eBills' mind swim.

As It began to struggle anew, crying and begging, Bill felt so cold and hard and sure of himself then. He knew what he had to do. How it would end.

She looked up at Bill nodding, "finish It."

He aimed right at It's pleading eyes and pulled the trigger. It broke, skull fracturing into a hundred pieces, body reeking of rot and black gunk. A mangled gurgle erupted from Its throat as it heaved one last time.

They scrambled off of It watching as Its body rotted away, the bodies of the children slowly coming down, hitting the ground with a thunk.

Maggots crawling in their skin.

Stan vomited.

They all looked at Bill, even now, ever their fearless leader.

"W-we need to get Richie to a hospital," he spoke.

"What about you," asked Stan, looking at the mess of blood and vomit on Bill's once white shirt.

"I-I'll be o-okay," he said. He had to believe that. That It had lied. Bill had not survived all that It had done to him to die now.

He made it about ten steps before collapsing in a heap. His skin hot to the touch. He was distantly aware of Beverly's screams and Ben calming them down. But it all felt so far away.

He drifted in and out of consciousness.

Mike and Stan carrying him. Dragging him up the sewers.

Richie's tourniquet.

Rain and floods and Derry wiped away from the face of the world.

His throat burned, bones aching. Occasionally he would be aware of more retching, more blood.

Was it his?

He looked up and it was Bev, cradling his head in her arms, telling him it was going to be okay even as his gums bled.

More rain. Rain that would never stop. Rotting away the house of Derry. Sloshing down into the sewers, flooding and flooding-

More heat and god he had never been this hot, skin burning and itching and vision swimming.

He was five again, seeing Georgie for the first time.

Something wet and cool.

Bright light that hurt his eyes. Bright bright-

Rain that would make the storm the day Georgie had died seem like a light shower. So much rain.

His heart slowed just like his dad's had.

And then nothing.

Notes for the Chapter:

i felt that beverly should be the one to mental tangle with It seeing as she had already survived the deadlights once while bill should be the one the physically fight It.

14. wrap our bones small griefs

When Bill comes too theres so much light, it blinds him, makes his vision bright bright white before there's nothing. Someone's crying and it's so hot, he pulls at his clothes, wrist stinging.

He can't see.

He can't see.

He squeezes his eyes shut and realizes he's shaking and sobbing. The person that's sobbing is him. Oh god! Oh god. Where are the rest of the losers! Bill can feel the scream forming in his throat. He can barely hold himself up and he doesn't know where he is and-

He screams.

Hands hold him down and oh god oh god not again not again he thrashes trying to see past the white and pushing and kicking. He falls onto the cold hard ground. His bones ache, feel broken and bruised and he can't stand up.

He feels so tired and light and he tries to fight the wave of exhaustion that comes over him-

Bill's laying in a tub of ice water. Somehow he still feels the burning under his skin. His throat is dry like sandpaper. He tries to get up but his limbs won't cooperate. He can't even lift his head.

He tries to cry out.

This is a trick. He doesn't know how, but it is. It. It. It.

He screams, but it comes out wrong. A strangled rasp.

Bill starts panicking, trying to stand, clenching his jaw through the pain. Pins and needles and sharp pains spring up all along his body.

The worst is his chest. He can see the puncture marks where It had dug Its claws in. Angry and red.

There's bruises on his side. He'd fallen at some point? Or had it been a dream? He can't remember anymore. He can't put his thoughts in order.

His dad. Georgie. Vic.

And oh god all the blood and flesh.

"Oh good," a nurse says coming in, "your awake."

It. It. It.

Bill forces himself up, ignoring the searing stabbing pain, and tries to run. But he can only manage to lift his head.

He starts shaking, not taking his eyes of the nurse despite the stinging. His eyes burn. He doesn't know how long he can keep them open. There's just too much light.

He waits for the tell tale yellow eyes.

"You have to calm down," she says in her pink scrubs, hair pulled back in a pony tail. She points at a heart monitor he hadn't even noticed. It keeps going up up uP. "The meds weren't helping your-"

He's distantly aware of the nurse yelling, running over to him before it's all darkness agin.

When he dreams again, it's not of the sewers for a change. This time he dreams of the beach. The beach where his parents would take them every summer, right after school ended, for a week.

They'd rent a cabin right on the beach.

Georgie and him would build sandcastles all day, running out into

the water not even caring that even in June, the water was still cold up in Maine. He'd duck under waves, holding his breath for as long as he could before having to come back up. Sometimes he'd swim so far out, he thought of just letting himself float out into the ocean.

But then Georgie would call out to him and he'd swim back in along with the next wave.

His mom would be better by the beach. Sometimes. She'd even cook them burgers. She'd lay a towel out on the sand and sit under the sun for hours. It was easier to pretend that she was relaxing here, instead of spending her day's in bed, only ever getting up to play the piano.

They all lived for the days she'd want to play with them. Take them out for a picnic and bake them cakes and cookies and make root beer floats. Then she'd help them built a fort out of sofa cushions, chairs, and blankets, letting them watch tv with her till they all feel asleep.

Those days had gotten further and further between as he got older.

In his dreams Georgie is alive and showing him a turtle he'd found crawling out to sea, about to get eat.

"But I saved it Billy," his baby brother beams up at him and-

The first thing he notices when he comes to again, this time in a bed, is the drip of the IV. The skin around the needle itches and he wants it out.

The light hurts his eyes, but its no longer blinding him.

He feels washed out, paper thin, like he could just drift away at the slightest touch. His body aches when he moves, but he can move. Slowly and careful, he sits up.

Bill's jaw aches too, like he'd just been too the dentist and had his

mouth open for too long. It's swollen and a stinging sensation runs to his teeth when he gently touches it.

The losers.

Richie.

Stan.

He gets up so fast the whole room spins. Bill stumbles, catching himself against the bed. He groans. Everything hurts and he can't think through the pain.

He bangs his head against the bed.

He needs to find the others.

He needs to pull himself together.

"Oh no young man." It's the same nurse as last time. Her scrubs are light blue with teddy bears all over them this time. How long has it been? How much time has passed?

Some strands of her dark hair have fallen into her face.

She rushes over and helps him back into bed. He tries to protest, but he can't get a damn word out. His jaw hurts overtime he moves, throbbing. Bill shakes his head, he doesn't-

Bill flinches when she touches him, feeling fresh tears run down his cheeks. His chest heaving as he tries to breathe, he can't. His lungs burn.

"Honey," she says careful, holding her hands up and backing away, "honey you've got to calm down."

When he nods, his vision swims, going out of focus and he blacks out for a second. Bill follows her instructions, taking a long breath in, and a slow breath out. He can't stop crying.

"Sweetie," she says, taking a small step towards him, hands still up. She's scared of frightening him. Not scared of him. It's the small

things. He reads the name tag as she approaches again. *Hannah*. "Sweetie, how are you feeling."

He just looks at her, reminding himself that she can't be It. It is dead. They had killed It down in the sewers, in the very place It had dragged so many of Its victims. He almost bites his lip, but he knows he can't. He doesn't trust himself not to draw blood.

"What about your name? Can you tell me that?"

She's by the foot of the bed now.

Bill opens his mouth to try and respond, but the pain is just too much. He yelps, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand.

"Let me get you some pain killers," she tells him, writing something into her pager. "The doctor wants to see you. Are you okay with that?"

He shakes his head. Bill can't. He can't let him hurt someone again.

"What about your friends? They've really been wanting to see you," she says.

He nods, slowly this time.

"First the painkillers and then your friends and then the doctor," she says, smiling softly. "Because you're going to have to sooner or later. I'm afraid I'm just a nurse."

Bill nods again.

"We haven't been able to connect your mom but that might be the storm. Worst storm in the history of Derry, can you believe?"

The little color in Bill's skin drains from his face, heartbeat pounding in his ears. It. His dad. Fuck fuck fuck.

He retches, but there wasn't anything left to throw up.

Bill can only imagine what It had done to his mother. His mom with her sad eyes, so often staring off into the distance, unable to do much

more than play her piano for days on end.

Hannah rushes over to him, handing him some water, “what did we say about calming down,” she tells him gently, quickly cleaning up the mess he’d made.

They wait in silence for the painkillers to come. He turns away from her, not wanting her to see him, when he swallows them down. Bill can’t help but jump at every loud sound that rings in from outside the room, from behind the curtain. He has to force himself to breathe, counting as he does.

“Let me go get your friends,” she says after a few minutes.

“S-sss-sst-stay.” His voice is so small. Bill can barely get the word out. His stutter hasn’t been this bad since right after the accident. His mother had been driving.

His dad had never let her drive again.

“Okay,” Hannah says, nodding.

Beverly and Eddie run in. Behind them Ben and Stan come in, shoving the two forward. Mike is the last to come in, pushing Richie’s wheelchair. His right thigh has thick white bandages over it. They’re all an assortment of hospital gowns and ill-fitting clothes, probably from the lost and found.

“Look which motherfucker finally decided to wake up!”

“Richie!”

“What! This motherfucker almost died on us!”

“Richie shut the fuck up for once,” Eddie snaps, “just shut up.”

"You'd think almost losing a leg would make him stop for at least a second," Stan mutters as he parks Richie's wheel chair by the bed.

Bill smiles for the first time in what feels like days. His shoulders relax, the tension running out of him. Seeing them here, not just knowing they were okay, but really seeing them makes it real. It's really dead. They're really okay.

He sighs in relief.

"You're really okay," Bev says, sitting down on the bed by him. Her eyes are glassy, skin washed out white under the lights.

"It's been two days," Mike volunteers. "It's been raining, badly. No one's been able to go out with the sewers overflowing. They're saying people can't even drive to the grocery store."

"Power went out a few times too," Ben adds, sitting down next to Beverly. Eddie and Mike settle into the two chairs after dragging them over, closer to Bill. Stan hovers awkwardly behind Richie's wheelchair.

"Only Eddie's mom was able to get here," Bev tells him, "but I don't think even a hurricane could stop that woman from getting to Eddie."

"Oh please," Richie snorts, "she was just scared her main man was dying along with his Dick!"

"Really Richie," Stan snaps. He meets Bill's gaze and doesn't flinch away. Bill could hug him right now. He could hug them all and never let them go.

"It's gotten lighter though, more of sprinkling than actual rain," Ben says, "there was even some sun shining through for the first time in two days. Even stopped for a few hours today."

"A very fitting biblical flood." Beverly wiggles her eyebrows but the mood turns serious. They grow quiet.

"Do you think its because of It," Stan finally ventures. "Do you think

It's really dead?"

They all looked at one another. Not daring to think about what the answer was. Not wanting to be the person to say that It might not be dead.

"Y-yuh-yes," Bill says, quieter than he meant to, sounding less sure of himself than he was. He thought of his fever dreams of floods and blood. "T-t-ttt-the ffff-f-floods-"

"It's okay," Mike says as Bill's words catch on his tongue. He can feel his frustration rising. "Take your time."

"They called it twice you know," Eddie starts, "your heart just stopped. They thought you were dead when we dragged you in. Tried to hide it from us too but Stan sneaked in. And then Bev. And they had to give you an ice bath, which I've had and man-"

"Rich-Eddie," Stan snaps.

"Don't drag me into this, " Richie says, offended.

"Well it is usually you," Mike adds, smiling.

"Trash the trash mouth, I get it."

Bill starts to laugh but smothers it, careful not to show his teeth. When he closes his eyes he can still see his dad under him, bloody and ripped apart by him.

"Bill," Mike says softly, noticing his actions. His fear of himself.

He flinches, gulping.

"Your eyes," Stan continues for him in a gentle tone instead of his usual jaded one, "they aren't yellow anymore."

Notes for the Chapter:

next chapter we find out what happened w sharon denbrough. stan and bill make up and things wrap up essentially.

ive also been hinting at bills mom being mentally ill
so yeah, thats a thing. i love changing things like
having stan know yiddish because why wouldn't a
rabbi's son know yiddish. why would they have the
torah upside down. im still upset about this.

15. Cleaning Piece 1

Notes for the Chapter:

title is based on a yoko ono art piece by the same name if anyone is interested

For the second time in as many weeks, the loser's parents, sans Beverly's and Richie's, streamed into the hospital room that the loser's had piled into.

It took another day for the storm to clear, and another day after that for the roads to clear enough for people to travel outside.

Mike's grandfather embraced both Mike and Beverly, seeing as how she's been staying with him, how he'd taken responsibility for her while her aunt flew in from Portland to sort things out. Leroy quietly talks to them both, making sure they really are going to be all right since they've dragged Bill out of the sewers once more; that they aren't just saying they're okay.

Ben's mother looks her son over, fretting over him almost as much as Eddie's mom does Eddie.

Stan's parents are calmer, content with seeing Stan whole and hearing Stan say he's okay even as he buries his head in his father's side. They'd wanted the adults to do something about It, to protect them, to keep them safe. Now, they were just glad not to be looking over their shoulders, to be alive, and to have their parents there even if they had done nothing when they should have.

They couldn't help being blinded by a cosmic entity, but it still hurt them to know that they were no longer kids, not really, not now that they were out from under the protection of their parents, not now that they knew there were things in the world their parents couldn't protect them from. There was no going back to who they had been before.

Even Beverly's aunt, her mother's sister that Beverly last saw when she had been two and too young to remember, stands awkwardly in

the corner, watching the losers and their parents. Her flight had gotten in when the storm had hit and she had to wait it out in a motel outside of Derry.

She's a redhead just like Beverly, but her hair is dark like ripe strawberries, skin creamy and clear of the freckles that litter Bev's skin, with a smattering of small tattoos on her right forearm that are impossible to clearly distinguish from far away. Dietrich Tench had her hands shoved in her pockets for lack of anything to do.

Bill's mom comes in last, being led by a Hannah, who looks unsure about the woman responsible for Bill. She's clutching something to her chest, eyes flickering like a scared rabbit. She's still in the pajamas that Bill had last seen her in.

By now, Bill is well enough to be awake for long periods of time. He can even walk to the bathroom on his own even as Richie insists on sharing his wheelchair with Bill. The doctors had told Richie he'd have a limp for the rest of his life.

The same doctors had told Bill he'd been lucky to survive the strain on his heart after having to be defibrillated twice in the span of hours, the fever that had run for days, unaffected by the medication, and his body rejecting all the IV fluids they'd tried to pump him full of to keep him from dying. Bill had just nodded along, barely able to stay awake for long.

Sharon Denbrough has to be led over to Bill, not quite understanding what was going on, washed out, in her own little world.

She gives Bill a frayed smile, eyes wet with tears. She hands Bill the lego turtle that had fallen when her hands shake so much, asking papery thin, as she hands it to Bill. "It took so long Billy, but I finally fixed it. I didn't stop until I did." She swallows, sitting down next to him, looking less like a responsible adult than an echo of his mother, "It has to be the way he left it. It had too."

Bill was used to it, used to his mom's ups and downs. But her down had lasted for so long this time, his dad had been so scared she'd never get out of this slump, the depression that had fallen their house worse than the house on Neibolt St, he'd tried to pretend that burying

Georgie was the solution. Desperate.

She slid her hand into Bill's, letting her tears freely fall.

"I'm okay mom. It's over." He could say that to her. She wouldn't question it. And she didn't. Bill's mom hummed in agreement, her fingers combing through Bill's hair.

"I want to go somewhere warm Billy. I can't get warm here. I put on sweater after sweater and I still can't get warm."

"We can go anywhere you want, as long as you take your medication."

She hummed in agreement.

It wasn't the medication that was the problem. The loss of his baby brother had hit them both hard, but her condition exasperated the loss. The depression, Eddie has whispered when he thought Bill couldn't hear, *their* depression. "I never wanted to come to Derry. It was awful. But he couldn't see it." She turns her gaze towards Bill, more lucid than she'd been in months, "I dreamt a turtle swam up to me on the same beach we always went to duckling. Swam right up to me with you on its back." She smiled softly at Bill.

For once, her crazy comments made sense.

"I dreamt that Georgie gave me a turtle on that beach."

"He's really gone isn't he," his mom says, finally accepting Georgie's death after a year. She wipes at the tears in her eyes.

"Yeah," Bill replies in a small voice, thinking about It and the sewers, accepting Georgie was dead, but he hadn't died for nothing.

And then Sharon Denbrough told her son what he desperately wanted to hear, "Everything's going to be okay Billy."

Stan runs up to Bill as they check out, his mom pushing him along in a wheelchair, still too weak to stand for long periods of time.

“Bill-“

“It’s okay,” he says. He never felt anything but bad for dragging his friends into this. Even when he’d been angry and hurt and punched Richie, he’d been more angry at himself than them.

“No Bill,” Stan says shaking his head, “you’d have died for us no questions asked and we-I wasn’t there for you when you needed me. If I hadn’t-if I had really been your friend, I’d been there when you needed me and none of this would have happened. It wouldn’t have hurt you. You’d never had to do what you did. I’m sorry Bill. I hate this. I hate all of this. I hate having to deal with all this shit! But it wasn’t your fault. And I’m sorry I blamed it all on you.”

“Stan,” he says, going to stand, tearing up, “it’s okay. Really,” as Stan rushes over to him, hugging Bill, careful not to be too rough with Bill. “I think I wanted t-to-,” he breaks off sighing into Stan’s shoulder. “What matters is you were there in the end, when I-I needed you. You pulled through Stan. You saved me.”

He hugs Stan tightly.

Bill’s happy to be alive. Happy that all of his friends are here. And for once, Bill doesn’t feel Georgie’s death like a punch to the gut. He stops thinking about his brother for a second, enjoying the hug, as the rest of the losers run over, forming what had to be the hundredth group hug in the last two days.

“What are we girls,” Richie cries, ruining the moment even as he grips them all harder.

Beverly immediately responds, “shut the fuck up Richie!”

“Shouldn’t you be in a wheelchair?”

“Guys,” Ben says making them all shut up.

They don’t want to ever part from the safety and comfort of each others hold.

“Swear to me,” Stan whispered to them at night, the TV was the only light source as infomercials played at two in the morning, “swear to me that if It isn’t dead, if It ever comes back, you’ll all come back and kill It.”

And they all had, taking a sharp shard of glass Richie had acquired from a bottle he had tried to make into a weapon, slicing their palms open, and swearing in blood. Now they’d truly be more than just friends.

Family forged in fire and blood.

The terror, which would not end for another 28 years-if it ever did end-began, so far as I know or can tell, with a boat made from a sheet of newspaper floating down a gutter swollen with rain.

But It never did come back. Not in 28 years, not in 55, not ever again.

But Bill did, along with Beverly, to visit the losers as often as he could, never able to make himself walk past or near the house on Neibolt St. without going into a panic attack, in Derry.

And though their roads took them down different paths, the connection they had never thinned or frayed, not after years, not ever.

Notes for the Chapter:

hmu on tumblr (lissbethsalander) if u want to know what the losers grow up to do. they don't lose their memories in this fic. Bev still moves. so does Bill. the turtle protected Bill's mom from It. while the turtle couldn't directly do anything it sort of just made her hard to notice which worked.